# EMPTINESS AND PARADOX

# IN THE THOUGHT OF FA-TSANG

by

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# I

# INTRODUCTION

## Historical Context

The life and thought of Fa-tsang (643-712 A.D.) are situated within the Chinese Buddhist tradition. In fact, D.T. Suzuki and several other modern Buddhologists have referred to the thought of Fa-tsang as the culmination and fruition of the long tradition of Buddhist thought in China.[1] Although this dissertation is directed primarily toward an interpretation of fundamental elements within Fa-tsang's system of thought itself, without extensive reference to its situation within an ongoing historical tradition, that is not to deny the importance of its historical context. Indeed, the most complete interpretation would be one which could thoroughly place Fa-tsang's *Hua-yen* system of thought within the entire tradition of Chinese Buddhism. Although that project is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to describe briefly the context of Fa-tsang's thought within the *Hua-yen* school and the whole of Chinese Buddhism.

Although the date of the original Buddhist infiltration into China cannot be accurately determined, contemporary scholarship

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[1] D.T. Suzuki, *Studies in Zen* (New York: Dell, 1955), p. 139.

places it sometime in the first century A.D.[2] It is reasonably clear, however, that the route by which Buddhist influence entered China was not directly linked to India. The first Buddhist influences in China were probably mediated through the small oasis cities of Central Asia where Buddhist ideas and institutions were becoming increasingly dominant in the first few centuries A.D. Merchant traders from these cities traveled along the ancient silk route that had for many years linked China to the rest of Asia, and in those journeys, became the first Buddhists in China.[3] In this earliest period, Buddhism was isolated in small merchant enclaves in the major cities of North China.

In the second century A.D., the last era of the unified Han dynasty, foreign missionaries, both Central Asian and Indian, began to appear in the major Chinese cities. The fact that one of their activities was the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese indicates that Buddhism had begun to attract some interest among the native Chinese. The early interest in these texts (e.g., the translations of the Parthian An Shih-kao in Lo-yang) seems to center on Buddhist meditation techniques that may have functioned to supplement Taoist treatises on that topic. The first known Mahāyāna missionary, Lokakṣema, who lived in Lo-yang from

[2] E. Zürcher, Buddhism, Its Origin and Spread (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 58.

[3] Ibid., p. 55.

168-188,[4] translated Prajñāpāramitā sūtras into Chinese in a way that attracted the attention of people familiar with the early Taoist philosophical tradition. These areas of intersection and common interest between Buddhist and Taoist thought were the basis on which Buddhist ideas began to become influential in China in the third and fourth centuries.

After the fall of the Han dynasty in 221 A.D. and the corresponding decline in the influence of Confucian thought among the elite, a revival of interest in traditional Taoist texts and a new form of philosophical style called "mysterious learning" (hsüan-hsüeh) began to emerge. By the fourth century Buddhism began to be associated with and compared to this "Neo-Taoist" trend. The association of these two systems of thought was carried out systematically through the translation process known as ko-i (matching meanings). A new idea found in Buddhist texts was interpreted by means of reference to a particular analogous term in the Chinese Neo-Taoist tradition.

Certainly, one of the most significant identities made in this manner was between the Neo-Taoist absolute, wu (nonbeing), the unnameable source of all existence, and emptiness (k'ung), the most fundamental concept/symbol in the Mahāyāna tradition. This influence on the Chinese interpretation of emptiness pervades the

[4]Richard Robinson, The Buddhist Religion (Belmont, CA: Dickenson, 1977), p. 145.

history of Chinese Buddhism, and is particularly significant centuries later in its influence on Hua-yen and Ch'an thought. For third and fourth-century Chinese monks, however, the consequences of this Buddhist/Taoist union was that the meaning of the Taoist wu overshadowed and prohibited a more comprehensive interpretation of the concept of emptiness. The interpretive possibilities in "emptiness" were hidden from the Chinese in the absence of an adequate intermediary between Sanskrit Mahāyāna texts and the Chinese language.

In 401 A.D. the man who was able to act as that intermediary arrived in Ch'ang-an, the capital of North China, thus effecting "a turning point in Chinese intellectual history."[5] Kumārajīva is a crucial figure in the history of Chinese Buddhism for two reasons. First, as a translator, Kumārajīva made certain important Mahāyāna texts available to the Chinese in translations that were both true to the original and in accord with the standards of high Chinese literary style. Perhaps most significant were his translations of four prominent Mādhyamika śāstras, which he completed in his first eight years in China. Second, Kumārajīva was important as a Mahāyāna philosopher who, for the first time, could communicate the subtleties of Mahāyāna thought to Chinese Buddhist monks. Kumārajīva himself was a well-known and respected authority on

[5] Richard Robinson, Early Mādhyamika in India and China (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), p. 5.

Mādhyamika in India, and, certainly at that time, the most gifted missionary to enter China.

The many students of Kumārajīva in Ch'ang-an were carefully instructed in Mādhyamika texts and thought in such a way that the teachings on "emptiness" gradually became clarified and disentangled from their previous Neo-Taoist context.

The oldest and most prominent of Kumārajīva's students, however, have been included in the group of intellectual monks called "the Buddho-Taoists, because they discussed Buddhism in a Taoist vocabulary and sought in Buddhism solutions to Neo-Taoist problems . . . ."[6] But as Robinson has shown,[7] most of these monks did grasp Kumārajīva's interpretation of the meaning of "emptiness" as expressed in his translations of Mādhyamika śāstras. These men, under Kumārajīva's tutelage and influence, are transitional figures to a new era in Chinese Buddhist thought.

The post-Kumārajīva era of Chinese Buddhism, the fifth and sixth centuries, has been appropriately called the "period of exegesis"[3] because the primary concern that motivated Chinese Buddhist thought was the careful and accurate exegesis of Indian

[6]Robinson, The Buddhist Religion, p. 147.

[7]Robinson, Early Mādhyamika, pp. 156-61.

[8]Stanley Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage in the Formation of T'ang Buddhism," in D. Twitchett, ed., Perspectives on the T'ang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 270-72. These reflections on fifth- and sixth-century Chinese Buddhism draw heavily on this insightful work.

Buddhist texts and the rigorous appropriation of their content. In contrast to Buddhist thought both before and after this period, the creative interpretation of texts was subordinated to the motivating ideal of being as faithful as possible to the standard of Indian Buddhist thought. The most highly regarded and revered figures in the fifth and sixth centuries were Indian translators and commentators on technical Buddhist śāstras. Rather than focusing on primary sūtras, the most important and intellectually sophisticated schools of Chinese Buddhist thought during this period, the San-lun, Ti-lun, and She-lun, devoted themselves to the exegesis and mastery of precise Buddhist śāstras (Mādhyamika śāstras, Vasubandhu's commentary on the Daśabhūmika sūtra, and Asanga's Mahāyāna saṃgraha śāstra, respectively). The extent to which the famed San-lun monk, Chi-tsang, for example, appropriated Mādhyamika methods, logic, and style in his interpretation of "emptiness" is characteristic of this era. By the middle of the sixth century, the Chinese Buddhist intellectual elite were well versed in Buddhist thought and tradition. Despite this success, however, a few prominent figures were beginning to express concern that the sophisticated intellectual tradition was inadequate for both the needs of the Buddhist layman and the individual quest for enlightenment.[9]

After over three centuries of fragmentation and disunion, the Chinese empire was reunited in the late sixth century under the

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[9]Ibid., pp. 273-74.

Sui and then T'ang dynasties. The reunification initiated a period of cultural vitality and creativity perhaps unequaled in Chinese history. This era of Chinese Buddhism, which Arthur Wright calls "the period of independent growth,"[10] gave rise to creative and significant transformations in Chinese Buddhist thought. Perhaps most significant is the fact that the exegetical schools of the previous era gave way to the fully Sinitic and mature schools of Chinese Buddhism: T'ien-t'ai, Hua-yen, Ch'an, and Ching T'u (Pure Land).

A few of the characteristics that differentiate the Sui/T'ang schools from their predecessors are indicative of a growth to maturity and independence in Chinese Buddhist thought. First of all, in contrast to the fifth and sixth century schools, the Sui/T'ang schools were primarily founded on an interpretation of Buddhist sūtras rather than śāstras.[11] That is to say, the Sui/T'ang schools took as their basis the primary texts rather than their commentaries and, in doing that, expressed a confidence in and preference for their own interpretations.

In all Sui/T'ang schools, with the possible exception of Fa-hsiang, interpretation of scripture was free and creative and not restricted to an accurate and literal reproduction of the

[10]Arthur Wright, Buddhism in Chinese History (New York: Atheneum Press, 1959), p. 65.

[11]Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage," p. 271.

intentions of the Indian original, as had been the case in the previous centuries. The principal figures in the *T'ang* schools of Buddhism maintained an unrestricted dialogue between the content of the *sūtras* and personal religious experience. The interpretations of "emptiness" in the *T'ien-t'ai*, *Hua-yen*, and *Ch'an* schools all display creative elements not explicitly present in the original texts being interpreted.

The new preference for Chinese interpretations over Indian interpretations in commentaries can be seen in the various lines of historical transmission. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the most revered Buddhist figures were the well-known Indian translators and commentators. But in the *Sui/T'ang* era, most of the schools traced their lineage not to Indian translators, but to a Chinese interpreter who is thought to have founded a line of succession.[12] The *T'ien-t'ai*, *Hua-yen*, *Fa-hsiang*, and *Ching-t'u* schools are all believed to be founded by an enlightened Chinese master rather than the Indian translator of their basic text, a phenomenon unheard of in the pre-*T'ang* schools.

What these characteristics indicate is that the *T'ang* schools of Buddhism had attained a maturity and autonomy that was absent in the earlier periods. Chinese Buddhist thought was beginning to be expressed independent of its Indian foundation, and in the *T'ang* era, this tendency came to fruition in the emergence of the

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[12] Ibid., pp. 272-73.

most creative and sophisticated schools of Chinese Buddhist thought.

The *Hua-yen* school rose to prominence at the height of this period and was a powerful Buddhist school until the massive persecution of Buddhism under Emperor Wu in 845. The influence of *Hua-yen* thought, however, extended far beyond its more limited influence as a distinct school or institution. The designation of *Hua-yen* as a "school" (*tsung*) can be somewhat misleading without a clarification of what that term implies in Chinese. The character "*tsung*" means a clan or a family with a common ancestry. In its Buddhist context, *tsung* refers to a group of monks who trace their lineage or common heritage through a succession of "ancestors" or patriarchs (*tsu*). The *Hua-yen tsung*, therefore, refers to those monks who conceive of their system of thought and practice as originating in and descending to them through a particular line of founding patriarchs.

An awareness of the existence of an autonomous "*Hua-yen* school" was not prominent until after the time of Fa-tsang, who was later designated the third patriarch of the school. A subsequent generation of Buddhists understood themselves to be participating in a separate school and were able to trace the origins of their system of thought and practice back through Fa-tsang to an originating founder. Awareness of the *Hua-yen* school as such begins with Fa-tsang's successor, Ch'êng-kuan, and the concept of

a succession of five patriarchs is present only in Tsung-mi, the fifth and last patriarch in the Hua-yen lineage.

One criterion for distinguishing a lineage or school was the devotion of several successive generations of monks to the rigorous study and propagation of one Buddhist text or group of texts, and the systematization and elaboration of ideas contained therein. For the Hua-yen school, this constituting factor was the interest shown in the Avataṃsaka sūtra by a succession of monks.

The Avataṃsaka sūtra (flower garland scripture) is a massive corpus of Buddhist texts, some of which probably circulated as independent texts in India. Some segments of the sūtra were composed as early as the first century A.D., but other sections may be dated as late as the fourth century. Although some of the sūtra may have been composed outside of India, possibly in Central Asia, several of the most important sections were originally Indian and are still extant in Sanskrit.[13]

There are three Chinese translations of the Avataṃsaka sūtra, known in Chinese as the Hua-yen ching. The first, translated into Chinese by Buddhabhadra in 420 A.D. was relatively unknown until perhaps a century later when it began to attract some attention. The second translation, by Śikṣānanda in 699, was completed at the request of and with the assistance of Fa-tsang,

[13]Francis Cook, Hua-yen Buddhism (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977), p. 21.

and under the patronage of the Empress of China, Wu Tse-t'ien. The final translation, by Prajñā toward the end of the eighth century, was limited to one important segment of the sūtra corpus, the Gaṇḍavhyūha.

Despite the fact that the Avataṃsaka sūtra is a composite text, there is, running throughout the sūtra, a uniformity of thought and ideas. Important Mahāyāna concepts are employed throughout, such as the concepts of emptiness, the bodhisattva's compassion, universal cosmic salvation, the One vehicle, skill-in-means, and the trans-human Buddha. Although the sūtra is considered to be one of the most philosophically sophisticated of Mahāyāna sūtras, nevertheless, its form of discourse and style involves elaborately described myths into which philosophical and theological content is interwoven. For Fa-tsang, as well as the other Hua-yen masters, the Avataṃsaka sūtra proved to be a highly suggestive basis on which to construct the Hua-yen system of thought and practice.

The first patriarch of the Hua-yen tsung is Tu-shun (557-640), who was known not so much as an innovative thinker or the founder of a new tradition, but rather as an accomplished contemplative and practitioner.[14] During the course of his life, Tu-shun became well-known for his expertise in meditation (ch'an), his asceticism and travel, as well as the miraculous powers that resulted from

[14]Tu-shun's biography is included in the Hsü-kua-seng-chuan, T. 50, pp. 653-54.

the perfection of these practices. But the reason Tu-shun was chosen to be the first patriarch of the Hua-yen school is that he chose the Hua-yen sūtra as his primary scriptural source and regarded it as the most perfect of all Mahāyāna texts. Although others were beginning to see the importance of the Hua-yen sūtra during his time, Tu-shun was probably the most active in its propagation and probably the best known of the monks who concentrated upon that sūtra. He seems to have employed the text primarily as a contemplative source and guide in meditation, and not so much as a source of philosophical reflection. Of the two texts traditionally ascribed to Tu-shun, the one text that he probably wrote, the Hua-yen Fa-chieh-kuan-mên,[15] is a short, systematic outline of contemplative topics (kuan-mên) derived from the Hua-yen sūtra. This text is considered to be the germinal and fundamental source of the Hua-yen school. It is of great historical significance to not only the Hua-yen school but also the Ch'an school and the contemplative lines of Chinese Buddhist thought.

Tu-shun's student Chih-yen (602-668) is regarded as the second patriarch of the Hua-yen school. Chih-yen favored the Hua-yen sūtra for its philosophical content as well as for contemplative purposes. Over the course of his life Chih-yen sorted out and began

[15]This text is embedded within Fa-tsang's Hua-yen fa-p'u t'i-hsin-chang, T. 45, pp. 652-54. Both Ch'eng kuan and Tsung-mi, the fourth and fifth Hua-yen patriarchs, wrote commentaries on Tu-shun's text.

to reformulate most of the ideas that were later to be systematized by Fa-tsang as the fundamentals of Hua-yen thought. Not only was Chih-yen adept at Sanskrit, but also the range of his familiarity with Buddhist texts is surprisingly extensive. Chih-yen began the process that was completed by Fa-tsang and the other Hua-yen masters, of creating a system of thought that, while taking the Hua-yen sūtra as its central element, attempted to incorporate and include the entire history of Buddhist thought. Chih-yen could quote from hundreds of various Buddhist texts and assimilate them into this initial Hua-yen system.

The most systematic and authoritative statement of Hua-yen thought, however, was accomplished in the works of Fa-tsang (643-712), the third Hua-yen patriarch. Fa-tsang is generally considered to be the most profound thinker and writer in the Hua-yen tradition, and his texts are considered to be the most important expression of the Hua-yen system.[16] As a consequence of this, the Hua-yen school is commonly referred to as the "Hsien-shou" school after an honorary title, "Hsien-shou" (head of the wise), conferred on Fa-tsang by the Empress of China, Wu Tse-t'ien.

Fa-tsang's ancestry has been traced back to Sogdia in Central Asia, so that, racially, he was not fully Chinese. His grandfather came to China as a dignitary and was appointed to the

[16] Biographical information on the life of Fa-tsang is drawn from two works in the Taisho Tripiṭaka: T. 50, pp. 280-86, and T. 50, p. 732.

imperial court by the Emperor.[17] Fa-tsang was reared in the capital of China at the height of Chinese and T'ang culture. His education was extensive and grounded in the Chinese classics.

At the age of seventeen Fa-tsang left home in search of an enlightened teacher and the true dharma.[18] He traveled to mountain monasteries, practicing asceticism and studying Mahāyāna sūtras.[19] After several years he received word that his parents were ill and returned home to the capital. At that time Chih-yen was lecturing at the Yün-hua temple in the capital and, after hearing Chih-yen preach the dharma, Fa-tsang became his disciple.[20]

In 670, after several years of study with his teacher, Fa-tsang was appointed head of the T'ai-yüan temple at the age of twenty-seven. This temple was of particular importance to the Empress Wu because it had been founded to commemorate her mother.[21] This was the beginning of a life-long close relationship between Fa-tsang and the Empress, who patronized Buddhist institutions lavishly. The Empress later began to promote the study and propagation of the Hua-yen sūtra (along with Ch'an and other traditions) in opposition to the Fa-hsiang school (i.e., Yogācāra), which had previously been imperially patronized.[22]

[17] T. 50, p. 281a.

[18] T. 50, p. 281a.

[19] T. 50, p. 281b.

[20] T. 50, p. 281b.

[21] R.W.L. Guisso, Wu Tse-T'ien and the Politics of Legitimation in T'ang China (Bellingham: Western Washington University Press, 1978), p. 48.

[22] Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage," pp. 297-305.

When Fa-tsang became dissatisfied with the Chinese translation after comparing the Chinese and Sanskrit versions of the Hua-yen sūtra, the Empress sent for Śiksānanda from Khotan to oversee a "new translation."[23] Fa-tsang assisted in the translation project as his knowledge of Sanskrit and familiarity with the breadth of Buddhist literature were excellent.[24] The "new translation" emerged in 699.

In addition to translations, which constitute a very small part of Fa-tsang's work, he produced numerous essays and commentaries. He wrote voluminously, and most of his texts are theological and philosophical treatises. These works have been studied over the centuries and are still employed in Japanese and Taiwanese Buddhist monasteries as guides in contemplation and meditation.

Although Fa-tsang's works consist of over one hundred volumes (chüan) perhaps the most important of these are the following:

Chin-shih-tzŭ chang (Essay on the Golden Lion), T. 45 (1880; 1881), pp. 663-67. This is an essay version of Fa-tsang's famous lecture to the Empress Wu Tse-t'ien.

Hua-yen i-hai pai-mên (One Hundred Entrances to the Sea of Meaning in the Hua-yen Sūtra), T. 45 (1875), p. 627. This text consists of a series of contemplations (kuan) deriving from topics in the Hua-yen sūtra.

Pan-jo po-lo-mi-to hsin ching lüeh shu (Brief Commentary on the Sūtra on the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom), T. 33 (1712), p. 552. This short but highly creative work is said to have been the most popular work during Fa-tsang's life.[25]

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[23] T. 50, p. 282a. [24] T.50, p. 282b.

[25] T. 50, p. 732b.

Hua-yen i-ch'êng chiao i fên-ch'i chang or Wu-chiao chang (Treatise on the Five Teachings), T. 45 (1866), p. 477. This is a lengthy and important discussion and classification of the history of Buddhist thought.

Hua-yen ching t'an hsüan chi (Record of the Search for the Mystery in the Hua-yen Sūtra), T. 35 (1876), p. 107. Fa-tsang's longest work, the text is a thorough interpretation of the Hua-yen sūtra and expression of Fa-tsang's system of thought.

After a life of extensive Buddhist literary activity, Fa-tsang died at the age of seventy in 712 nd was honored with an elaborate state funeral.[26]

On the basis of the writings of Fa-tsang, the Hua-yen teachings remained highly influential after his death. The school claims two more patriarchs after Fa-tsang: Ch'êng-kuan (737-838) and Tsung-mi (780-841). Both monks were sophisticated thinkers in their own right and were able to extend the system of thought that was elaborated under Fa-tsang. Immediately after Fa-tsang, however, the most significant development in Chinese Buddhism was the rise to prominence of the Ch'an school. The influence of Ch'an on the Hua-yen school, and vice versa, during this period can be clearly seen in both Ch'êng-kuan and Tsung-mi. Indeed, the intersection and merging of these two schools, which was completed centuries later, began to take place at this time.

The fourth Hua-yen patriarch, Ch'êng-kuan, studied Ch'an in three of the most important Ch'an lineages, Niu-t'ou, Ho-tse,

[26]T. 50, p. 286a.

and Northern.[27] Ch'êng-kuan began the process, later extended by Tsung-mi and other *Ch'an* masters, of showing the relationship between *Ch'an* and the *Hua-yen* philosophical tradition. One notable way in which Ch'êng-kuan attempted to develop the *Hua-yen*/*Ch'an* relation was to modify Fa-tsang's classification of teachings (*p'an-chiao*) to include the *Ch'an* school. On the fourth level, one level beneath *Hua-yen* thought, Fa-tsang had placed the "sudden teaching" (*tun-chiao*), which he had identified with the element of sudden enlightenment in the *Vimalakīrti sūtra*. Ch'êng-kuan placed the *Ch'an* practitioners of the sudden teaching on this fourth level, beyond *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* on the second level and *tathāgatagarbha* thought on the third level.

With Tsung-mi, the fifth and final patriarch of the *Hua-yen* school, the identity between *Hua-yen* and *Ch'an* was taken considerably further. In fact, Tsung-mi is regarded as a patriarch in one lineage of the *Ch'an* school as well as in the *Hua-yen* school. As a Ch'an master, Tsung-mi was highly influential in promoting the use of *Hua-yen* texts in *Ch'an* monasteries and among *Ch'an* practitioners. Some of Tsung-mi's writings are regarded as *Ch'an* texts, while others are more significant for the *Hua-yen* school.

Four years after the death of Tsung-mi, Buddhist institutions were largely demolished in the massive suppression of Buddhism

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[27] Jeffrey Broughton, *Kuei-feng Tsung-mi: The Convergence of Ch'an and the Teachings* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1975), pp. 72-73.

carried out by Emperor Wu-tsung in 845. The systematic confiscation of Buddhist property and the destruction of temples and monasteries, as well as the decree for monks and nuns to return to the laity, was a persecution from which Chinese Buddhism would never completely recover. This event marks the end of the Hua-yen school as an independent institution in China; only the Pure Land (Ching-t'u) and Ch'an schools were able to rise once again to some degree of prominence and influence. All Chinese Buddhist philosophical schools were effectively subdued. The effects of the 845 suppression and the atmosphere of political chaos that characterized the later T'ang dynasty made the effective reestablishment of these schools impossible.

Nevertheless, the influence of the Hua-yen school and the thought of Fa-tsang were important forces in many subsequent philosophical and religious developments in the Far East.

Besides the powerful influence of Hua-yen thought in Ch'an lineages through the T'ang and Sung dynasties,[28] Hua-yen thought was to exercise considerable philosophical influence on Neo-Confucian thought in its eclipse of Buddhism in China.[29] Furthermore, the Hua-yen school was exported to Japan in the eighth

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[28]For a summary of these influences see Kang-Nam Oh, A Study of Chinese Hua-yen Buddhism (Ph.D. Dissertation, McMaster University, 1976), pp. 240-48.

[29]W.T. Chan, A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 408.

century and flourished there briefly as one of the great Nara schools of Buddhism. And in both China and Japan, the close relationship between Ch'an/Zen and Hua-yen/Kegon has been carried down into the twentieth century, so that D.T. Suzuki and H. Dumoulin can say,

> Zen. . ."is the practical consummation of Buddhist thought in China and Kegon [Hua-yen] philosophy is its theoretical culmination." The two are related in this manner so that "the philosophy of Zen is Kegon and the teaching of Kegon bears its fruit in the life of Zen."[30]

## Summary and Thesis

Until recently, very little research has been directed toward the Sui/T'ang schools of Chinese Buddhism (with the exception of the Ch'an school). Interest in this area of study had lagged far behind other areas of Buddhist studies. No full length studies of Hua-yen thought, for example, existed in a Western language before 1970. However, in the following decade the situation has changed, particularly with regard to the Hua-yen school. Within this brief period of time at least six major works have appeared in English on Hua-yen thought. Since these research efforts constitute part of the basis on which this dissertation has been conceived, it is necessary to briefly describe their scope and accomplishments in order to distinguish the particular direction taken in this project

[30]Quoted from H. Dumoulin, A History of Zen Buddhism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), p. 38.

and to acknowledge the debt that a subsequent work always owes to its predecessors.

The first book published in a Western language that concerns the Hua-yen school of Buddhism was Garma C.C. Chang's The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism, which appeared in 1971.[31] This "pioneering work," written from the perspective of a modern Chinese Buddhist who is also familiar with Western culture and thought, attempts to give "the gist and the essential elements of Hwa Yen teachings."[32] This intention is carried out very carefully, beginning with the "philosophical foundations of Hwa Yen" in the doctrine of emptiness, and proceeding through the most important Hua-yen doctrines. Structured to be an elementary introduction to Hua-yen, the work is of considerable value for that purpose, especially in view of the numerous translations from various Hua-yen texts. The book is of less interest to more advanced readers, however, because the discussion is presented on a basic and popular level. In this respect Chang's book has been supplemented by subsequent works.

Foremost among these are the works of Francis Cook, the most important of which are his Ph.D. dissertation,[33] a translation

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[31]Garma C.C. Chang, The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971).

[32]Ibid., p. x.

[33]Francis H. Cook, Fa-tsang's Treatise on the Five Doctrines: An Annotated Translation (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1970).

and commentary on Fa-tsang's Treatise on the Five Doctrines and his book Hua-yen Buddhism.[34] These works, along with several articles by Cook, are an important impetus in the recent interest in Hua-yen thought. Cook's translation of the lengthy and difficult Treatise on the Five Doctrines (Wu-chiao chang) made available to English readers for the first time a complete and significant Hua-yen text. The introduction and commentary included in the text help render some of the more difficult sections understandable.

His Hua-yen Buddhism, published in 1977, constitutes the best general work on Hua-yen thought. Its generality consists in the fact that it deals with almost all of the fundamentals of Hua-yen thought, as well as its continuity with earlier Mahāyāna Buddhism. Of special importance are its clarification of the meaning of the Hua-yen concept of interpenetration and the final chapter on Hua-yen ethics, which lends itself well to the overall format of the work. The entire project is carried out in a deeply sympathetic and articulate manner.

Three other doctoral dissertations have been written on Hua-yen Buddhist thought within the last few years. The first of these is Robert Gimello's Chih-yen and the Foundations of Hua-yen Buddhism.[35]

[34] Francis H. Cook, Hua-yen Buddhism, The Jewel Net of Indra (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977).

[35] Robert M. Gimello, Chih-yen (612-668) and the Foundations of Hua-yen Buddhism (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1976).

This work has several foci. Its most general concern is to consider early Hua-yen Buddhism as "an instance of conceptual change within a religious tradition."[36] Gimello's interest here is to see in the early Hua-yen patriarchs the "sinification of Buddhism," that is, to understand the process through which Indian Buddhism gradually took on a thoroughly Chinese form. A second focus is directed towards an understanding of the life and thought of Chih-yen, the second patriarch of the Hua-yen school, and his teacher, Tu-shun. By far the most important accomplishment of this work, however, is its development of the "foundations" of Hua-yen thought in earlier Indian and Chinese Buddhist thought. This impressive historical study develops a clear line of thought leading to Hua-yen through the Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, and tathāgatagarbha schools of thought and their counterparts in fifth- and sixth-century China. In an appendix Gimello has also contributed an excellent translation of the seminal Hua-yen text entitled Discernments of the Dharmadhātu of the Avatamsaka (Hua-yen fa-chieh kuan-mên).

Another Ph.D. dissertation, completed in the same year, is a study of the Hua-yen dharmadhātu doctrine by Kang-Nam Oh.[37] The author has traced the evolving meaning of the dharmadhātu (fa-chieh)

[36] Ibid., p. 2.

[37] Kang-Nam Oh, A Study of Chinese Hua-yen Buddhism with Special Reference to the Dharmadhātu (fa-chieh) Doctrine (Ph.D. Dissertation, McMaster University, 1976).

doctrine in the Avatamsaka sūtra itself and in the five patriarchs of the Hua-yen school. In this historical study Oh has demonstrated the concerns that have been added to the idea of the dharmadhātu by each of the patriarchs. In addition, the author has summarized what he considers to be the significance of the dharmadhātu doctrine in Hua-yen thought, and also its influence on subsequent Sino-Japanese traditions.

And, finally, Jeffrey Broughton's 1975 Ph.D. dissertation is a study of the fifth Hua-yen patriarch, Tsung-mi.[38] The introductory chapters of this work summarize the "all-at-once/step-by-step" controversy in Chinese Buddhist thought, present an overview of Tsung-mi's life, and trace the history of the Dharmatā (Hua-yen) lineage. The primary contribution of this study, however, is an annotated translation of Tsung-mi's Preface to the Collected Writings on the Source of Ch'an (Ch'an-yüan chu-ch'uan-chi tu-hsü). This voluminous work was Tsung-mi's masterful attempt to show how the different Ch'an lineages are related and correspond to the major streams of Mahāyāna tradition. Because of Tsung-mi's status as an important figure in the Hua-yen and the Ch'an schools, Broughton's work is applicable to the study of both traditions.

The dissertation submitted here differs from these earlier works primarily in terms of its particular focus of attention. As

[38] Jeffrey L. Broughton, Kuei-feng Tsung-mi: The Convergence of Ch'an and the Teachings (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1975).

its title indicates, this project involves a study of two related aspects of Fa-tsang's system of thought: the concept/symbol emptiness and the systematic use of paradoxical language. Even a cursory reading of any of Fa-tsang's texts demonstrates the ubiquity of both of these elements in his system of thought. However, their meaning and significance are not immediately obvious to the reader. These two doctrinal elements are expressed, at least to our mind, in a puzzling and mysterious manner, a manner that initially brings forth questions about even the most basic sense of the texts.

One aspect of the thesis of this project is that the most important key to unlocking the meaning and significance of the texts of Fa-tsang, including his ever-present paradoxical assertions, is an understanding of Fa-tsang's interpretation of the basic Mahāyāna religio-philosophical concept/symbol, emptiness (k'ung/śūnyatā). Our analysis and interpretation of the concept/symbol emptiness (k'ung) in selected texts of Fa-tsang yields the following conclusions.

First, the character k'ung (emptiness) appears in the texts as the most important element in a systematic effort directed at overcoming the "unsatisfactory" (k'u/duḥkha) nature of human existence. The texts describe the existential situation of human suffering and ignorance, and offer a program directed toward eliciting a renewed and enlightened mode of existence. This is the context within which the concept of emptiness must be understood.

Second, analysis of the character k'ung in Fa-tsang's texts has yielded three distinct meanings of that term:

(1) When k'ung is predicated of the subject of a sentence, its meaning is that the subject is empty, that is, that the subject has originated dependent on conditions outside of itself, and is, therefore, lacking in self-nature or own-being (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva). This predication is part of a lengthy and gradual process aimed at making the reader or hearer receptive and open to the manifestation of ultimate truth (chên-t'i).

(2) The character k'ung functions in other contexts to refer to this sudden and overpowering awareness of ultimate truth: the experience of "emptiness." In such contexts the sense of the word k'ung is the utter destruction and cessation of all familiar structures and forms of conventional experience (su-t'i).

(3) The third meaning of emptiness, often expressed as "true emptiness," appears in the texts as an extension of and reaction to the second sense of that term. Although emptiness as "cessation" is an expression emerging from the immediate impact of the breakthrough of ultimate truth, it is not the final truth about emptiness. "True emptiness" refers to the deeper and more mature appropriation of the experience of emptiness and form as "suchness." "True emptiness" is neither the negation of form nor the affirmation of form taken in isolation from their dialectical opposites. Rather, in the manifestation of "true emptiness," the two opposites, form and emptiness, are paradoxically united without obstructing the nature of each.

Third, on the basis of this analysis, we have concluded that Fa-tsang's understanding of "true emptiness" has enabled him to successfully counter the inclination in many Chinese and Indian Buddhist texts toward a final dualism between ordinary illusory existence and the transcendent state to which its negative language refers. In Fa-tsang's "true emptiness" it is clearly evident that full enlightenment does not involve the cessation of existence in preference for a transcendent state or dimension of

being. On the contrary, the realization of true emptiness entails the manifestation of unconditioned truth within the conditioned context of human existence rather than beyond it. This manifestation enables a renewed mode of being within human existence which overcomes the alienation and suffering characteristic of participation in conventional truth. This "enlightened" mode of being arises in an immediate awareness of the ultimate truth of "suchness," which is described as the paradoxical union of form and emptiness.

Fourth, this dissertation concludes that it is partially by means of the symbolic dimension in the concept/symbol emptiness (both k'ung and li) that the texts function to guide the reader toward and to evoke the mode of being referred to above. Emptiness is symbolic (of ultimate truth) because in negating itself as a concept or symbol it points beyond itself to its referent: the immediate realization of unconditioned emptiness or "suchness." In its symbolic capacity, emptiness elicits a mode of being that is open and receptive to ultimate truth (chên-t'i).

Fifth, it has become clear that Fa-tsang's version of the emptiness doctrine gives rise to an elaborate cosmological understanding that takes emptiness and its synonym, dependent origination, as its basis. By interpreting emptiness and dependent origination as relatedness, Fa-tsang has expressed a cosmological understanding that emphasizes the relations between entities in the world rather than the entities themselves. This cosmology

accords well with emptiness because it shifts the focus of attention from the own-being of all entities to the relations and dependencies through which all entities are constituted. In addition it is shown that Fa-tsang's cosmological discussion carries implications that have importance for other aspects of his system of thought.

Sixth, our interpretation of emptiness in the texts of Fa-tsang concludes that the context and meaning of the doctrine of emptiness is extended and given a predominantly affirmative basis by means of reconciling that doctrine with the idea of the One Mind in the Awakening of Faith. By identifying emptiness with undifferentiated, prereflective Mind, then discussing its self-negation or differentiation from itself in saṃsāra, and the subsequent return to itself in enlightenment, Fa-tsang establishes a basis on which to assert the ultimate identity of form and emptiness, phenomenal awareness and enlightenment. This identity constitutes a basis for the sanctification of phenomenal experience and, in that regard, functions to supplement and confirm Fa-tsang's interpretation of "true emptiness." It is further asserted that this understanding of emptiness and the doctrine of the One Mind give rise to paradoxical statements that are of primary theological and soteriological significance in the texts of Fa-tsang.

The interpretation of paradox given in Chapter IV of this dissertation is founded on the discussion of emptiness and its place in the texts of Fa-tsang. The discussion there maintains

that the various forms of Fa-tsang's doctrine of emptiness give rise to paradoxical statements that exist throughout the texts and that play a prominent role in the system of thought as a whole. In Chapter IV the analysis of paradoxical assertions in the texts yields three variant forms of paradox, each relating to the doctrine of emptiness in a somewhat different manner.

The first of these three types of paradox, which derives from the influence of the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras, concerns the union of two contradictory elements. Here the texts assert that "form is emptiness, and emptiness is form," where emptiness has been defined as the negation of form. This is to make the paradoxical assertion that form is not form, and so forth.

The second type of paradox involves the startling claim that ultimate reality may become manifest in and through conditioned, relative reality. Unconditioned emptiness is revealed in conditioned empty phenomena despite the discontinuity and opposition between them.

A third type of paradox in Fa-tsang's texts, expressed from the enlightened perspective of ultimate truth, involves assertions that contradict the conventional restrictions of time and space. This type of paradox presupposes the second type, which relates the ultimate truth of emptiness to conventional truth, but it focuses on phenomenal forms themselves. From the perspective of "emptiness," one sees that any conditioned form paradoxically interpenetrates with, and includes, all others.

All three types of paradox are found in the texts in conspicuous and significant contexts and in great frequency. The purpose of the final section in our last chapter is to ask why paradox might be so purposefully displayed and systematically cultivated. What is the significance toward which paradoxical assertions are made? In answer to this question, which is nowhere explicitly addressed in the texts themselves, Chapter IV presents an interpretation that appears to illuminate the meaning of the texts. Considered in the light of this interpretation, the texts and their paradoxical language take on meaning where the initial reading found them abstruse and puzzling. This interpretation, stated in the form of a thesis, includes the following four points.

First, in the context of Fa-tsang's works, paradox functions to express the inexpressibility of unconditioned reality, or ultimate truth. This is accomplished through self-negation, or the correlation within a reference to ultimate truth of both affirmation and negation. The reference to ultimate truth is posited (affirmation), and simultaneously denied (negation) because the reference itself is not ultimate. In the texts of Fa-tsang the most conspicuous model for this function of paradoxical language is the symbol emptiness which proclaims the emptiness of all symbols including itself.

Second, besides the fact that Fa-tsang's texts employ paradox as the most nearly adequate means of referring to ultimate truth or reality, there is also a more direct link between paradox and

ultimate truth. Paradox is interpreted to be both the form of the appearance of ultimate truth and the form of the reception of ultimate truth. Ultimate truth becomes manifest to human awareness by paradoxically appearing in and through nonultimate phenomena. The texts repeatedly assert that unconditioned emptiness is revealed only in conditioned form, a paradoxical manifestation. And in that experience, unconditioned reality both exhausts and affirms the phenomenal form through which it appears.

On the subject side of the experience, paradox is the form of human reception and awareness of ultimate truth. One becomes aware of unconditioned reality through a conditioned form in an ecstatic experience that breaks down the separation of subject and object, yet one can judge that the form through which ultimate truth appears is not itself ultimate. The ultimate truth of emptiness appears in conventioned forms of reality, and in the reception of that appearance one realizes that the forms themselves are empty and relative.

Third, this thesis maintains that paradoxical assertions in Fa-tsang's texts function to evoke or elicit the religious experience from which they derive. Paradoxical statements are very commonly found in the texts at the conclusion of short meditations or contemplations (kuan) that were essential to Hua-yen practice (hsing). It is stated that in this respect paradoxical language in the texts of Fa-tsang bears resemblance to the function of kung-an (koans) in the Ch'an (Zen) school. Intent meditation on

a paradoxical kuan or a kung-an functions to prepare for and to evoke the manifestation of enlightenment. The thesis maintains that the soteriological efficacy of paradoxical contemplations lies in their self-denying character. In negating itself, a paradoxical thought or assertion points beyond itself. A thought that fully contradicts itself at the same time is one that is open and receptive to what may lie beyond the realm of thinking. In the act of entertaining a paradoxical thought, one directs oneself through thought to that which is other than thought. The openness and receptivity established in paradoxical contemplations is interpreted to be the occasion for the sudden breakthrough or manifestation of ultimate truth.

Fourth, this thesis maintains that, in their use of paradox, Fa-tsang's texts do not advocate a dogmatic denial of thought and rationality. On the contrary, this interpretation claims that the texts employ a high level of thought and rationality in a systematic effort to remain receptive to and to elicit the ultimate truth which cannot be grasped through thought and rationality. This is the meaning of the claim in Fa-tsang's texts that the ultimate truth of emptiness is realized only through the conventional truth of form. Conventional truth, which is constituted by thought and language, is the medium through which ultimate truth is revealed, and is thus a condition for the possibility of enlightenment.

Hermeneutical Reflections and Method

This dissertation is primarily based on the hermeneutical theory of Hans-Georg Gadamer as it has been developed in two works, Truth and Method[39] and Philosophical Hermeneutics,[40] as well as in his series of lectures and seminars as Ida Beam Visiting Professor at The University of Iowa in the fall of 1978. The fundamental task of Gadamer's hermeneutical theory is to clarify what takes place in the process of understanding and interpretation, rather than to establish rules and methods for proper procedure (although various methods are certainly implied in the discussion). Hermeneutics involves the attempt to bridge the gap between the finite horizons[41] of one's understanding and something that, lying beyond those horizons, is not immediately and clearly understandable. (Although Gadamer's theory is meant to apply universally to understanding, in our brief discussion we will be concerned only with understanding the meaning of an historical text.)

In opposition to "scientific methods" in interpretation that claim a presuppositionless access to the object of interpretation "in itself," Gadamer claims that understanding is a process that

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[39]Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

[40]Hans-Georg Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

[41]By "horizon" is meant "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point." Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 269.

entails a dialectic between subject and object. This is to say that the interpreter is as important an element in the event of understanding as is the object of understanding. Understanding can never be entirely "objective" and "presuppositionless" because the one who understands always does so within a particular temporal/spatial, historical context. There is no human standpoint outside of one's historical situation from which to understand and interpret a text. All understanding takes place with reference to one's situation in the present, a situation that necessarily involves particular horizons, presuppositions and expectations. These are not hindrances to understanding, but are rather the basis on which understanding takes place.

> Historical consciousness fails to understand its own nature if, in order to understand, it seeks to exclude that which alone makes understanding possible [i.e., one's own historical situation]. To think historically means, in fact, to perform the transposition that the concepts of the past undergo when we try to think in them. To think historically always involves establishing a connection between those ideas and one's own thinking. To try to eliminate one's own concepts in interpretation is not only impossible, but manifestly absurd. To interpret means precisely to use one's own preconceptions so that the meaning of the text can really be made to speak to us.[42]

Although one's "hermeneutical situation" involves particular horizons that are constituted by the language of one's time and place as well as other historical factors, it is not the case that

[42]Ibid., p. 358.

one's situation and horizons are rigid and unalterable. Horizons are fluid and always expanding on the basis of new experience, including the encounter with texts. To truly understand a text out of the past is to mediate its meaning into one's present situation thereby expanding one's horizons. To effect this mediation, past meaning embodied in an historical text must be translated into concepts that are meaningful in the present.[43] This process of mediating the past into the present, the process in which an alien text is made meaningful and therefore understood, is described by Gadamer as a "fusion of horizons."[44]

Rather than suspending one's own horizons in the act of interpreting, one broadens one's horizon of understanding by appropriating the meaning communicated by the text. The finite horizons of both text and interpreter are fused in that the meaning of the text, and its horizon, are mediated into one's present horizon of understanding. According to Gadamer, this fusion of horizons is worked out through a dialectic of question and answer that takes place between one's own horizon and that of the text.

Since dialogue between text and interpreter is essential to understanding, the subject's own situation and participation cannot be placed outside the occurrence of understanding. Not only does the interpreter address questions to the text from the perspective of his own horizon of understanding, questioning its assertions

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[43]Ibid., p. 357. [44]Ibid., p. 273.

and presuppositions, but the reverse is also the case. In any authentic understanding of a text, the text poses questions to the interpreter as well, challenging and bringing his perspective out into the open.

The point that unites both partners in the dialogue, and the basis on which a fusion of horizons occurs, is the subject matter presented in the text, its fundamental and motivating concern. According to Gadamer this basic concern is found when one locates the question to which the text as a whole is a response. The position asserted by the text is seen as a response to a fundamental question[45] (which may or may not be explicitly given in the texts), and it is this question that serves as the basis for the dialogue between the text and its interpreter. In this dialectical process, it is necessary to go beyond what is explicitly stated in the text in order to understand its motivating questions and presuppositions, as well as other possible answers that were either rejected or not seen.

This dialectical process is carried out not with reference to the intentions and subjectivity of the author of the text, but with the text itself. According to Gadamer's theory, the meaning of a text cannot be defined in terms of the intention of its author. Each text possesses a certain content of meaning that transcends

[45]Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, p. 11.

the author and that may or may not be illuminated by reference to the personality behind it.

> To understand [a text] does not mean primarily to reason one's way back into the past, but to have a present involvement in what is said. It is not really about a relationship between persons, between the reader and the author (who is perhaps quite unknown), but about sharing in the communication that the text gives us. This meaning of what is said is, when we understand it, quite independent of whether we can gain from the tradition a picture of the author. . .
> Let us recall that the task of hermeneutics was originally and chiefly the understanding of texts. . . In actual fact, writing is central to the hermeneutical phenomenon, insofar as its detachment both from the writer or author and from a specifically addressed recipient or reader has given it a life of its own. What is fixed in writing has raised itself publicly into a sphere of meaning in which everyone who can read has an equal share.[46]

One cannot simply assume that the meaning that one derives in the reading of a text corresponds with the meaning intended by the author because the text's meaning is mediated through the horizon and perspective of its interpreter. The meaning of a text is derived by means of one's present participation in the subject matter given by the text. What is understood in a text is the meaning of a text as it is mediated to understanding within one's own present horizon. This standard of meaning and concept of understanding prohibit the common idea that there is one fully "correct" interpretation that all attempts at interpretation strive

[46] Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 353.

to reproduce. This is the case because "every interpretation has to adapt itself to the hermeneutical situation to which it belongs."[47]

Gadamer's hermeneutical theory has been viewed by some as a denial of the possibility of critical interpretation and scholarship. This seems not to be the case, however, since Gadamer's hermeneutics does not necessarily deny critical methods and their achievements. In fact, various methods implied in Gadamer's theory can be taken as supplemental to and/or corrective of those methods. However, what Gadamer does deny is the understanding that most critical historians have of what is achieved by those methods and various presuppositions that lead to that understanding. Essentially, Gadamer denies the possibility of an absolute perspective from which a text can be "objectively" understood, without reference to the interpreter's own situation and perspective. There is no meaning of a text "in itself" beyond an interpreter for whom it can be meaningful. Gadamer's contribution to critical theory and methodology is the adaptation to them of a comprehensive theory of understanding that can serve as a foundation for the development of critical methods and procedures.

This understanding of what is involved in the interpretation of a text implies a particular stance in the interpreter from which understanding is facilitated and enhanced. Perhaps the most

[47] Ibid., p. 358.

important characteristic of this stance is that one must be conscious of the finite nature of human understanding. This can mean at least two things. First, one must be aware of the fact that one's understanding of a text and its meaning are always a mediated, conditioned understanding. And second, understanding is facilitated when one recognizes the finitude of one's own perspective and horizon in opposition to which a text may propose an alternative.

The awareness of both of these meanings of human finitude leads to an attitude in the interpreter of openness to the meaning presented in the text. A questioning dialogue with a text in which the interpreter is open to the alien meaning presented there, and is willing to be questioned by the text in return, is a dialogue in which a greater depth of understanding becomes possible. That is, in genuine dialogue one must be willing to "risk" one's present horizon of understanding in view of the possibility that one's horizon may be broadened by an open confrontation with the meaning of a text. In this sense, the questions that one addresses to the text are not so much an interrogation of its position, but rather a means of being open to what is asserted there, and of eliciting the strongest case that can be made on its behalf.

These hermeneutical principles then have guided this present study of the texts of Fa-tsang and the interpretation of them presented in this dissertation. This dissertation is therefore conceived as an attempt to make explicit and to express the

understanding of two theological elements in the texts of Fa-tsang, emptiness and paradox, that has emerged from our study of and dialogue with selected texts of Fa-tsang. One consequence of this understanding is that this interpretation is not claimed to be the correct interpretation of the intentions of the author of those texts. This should be understood, even where, for stylistic or other reasons, statements are so worded that they seem to imply an intention beyond the meaning of the statement itself (e.g., reference to the "thought" of Fa-tsang).

This does not mean, however, that all criteria by which this interpretation can be evaluated are abolished. On the same hermeneutical bases, it may certainly be shown that another interpretation is superior to this one. In any dialogue and confrontation between two different interpretations that reach a conclusion and are resolved, one interpretation emerges as more adequate than the other (although more often than not both positions are subordinated to a third, which arises in the interaction between them).

The most important criterion for making this distinction is that an interpretation must be able to include all particular aspects of a text or group of texts (i.e., chapters, statements, and the like) and to assimilate them into the whole of the interpretation without contradiction between them. "The harmony of all the details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding. The failure to achieve this harmony means that

understanding has failed."[48] All the various aspects of an interpretation must fit coherently into the whole, as well as be in accord with each other.

In addition to such internal criteria, one can bring to bear on the evaluation of an interpretation all that can be known about the historical situation of a text (and its author, whenever applicable) as is generally done in modern historical work. These methods may assist in the process of determining where an interpreter's presuppositions have been inappropriately projected onto the meaning of a text, thereby too easily covering up its alien nature. The best interpretation is one that allows the text to assert its meaning within its own context, although this does not mitigate the inescapable fact that the text and its context must still be mediated to understanding that is situated in the present as well as in this context.

The two primary concerns of this dissertation, the interpretation of emptiness and paradox in the texts of Fa-tsang, were not determined in advance of the textual research. Rather, these two concerns emerged in the process of the dialogue with the texts, and initially their emergence took the form of an obstruction to understanding. In the case of the ever-present concept "emptiness" in the texts, it became apparent that comprehensive understanding was being partially obstructed by our pre-understanding of the

[48] Ibid., p. 259.

concept "emptiness" that had been derived from translations of Indian Mahāyāna texts, Prajñāpāramitā sūtras and Mādhyamika śāstras. Applying that understanding to instances of that concept in the texts of Fa-tsang occasionally led to contradictions, which indicated a failure in understanding. In the case of "paradox," it was not clear for some time why paradoxical statements were being expressed, what they meant, or what significance they might have.

In the course of raising a series of questions to the texts, it became apparent that an understanding of these two elements, emptiness and paradox, was crucially important to the task of understanding the texts and Fa-tsang's system of thought as a whole. The understanding that has been made explicit in this interpretation is the result of having followed the dialogue further to a conclusion, with special concern for an understanding of emptiness and paradox. The topics and questions that arise in the course of this dissertation reflect the direction that the dialogue has taken.

It has been helpful in articulating this interpretation to distinguish the sense or explicit meaning of a sentence or a text from its significance or referent. Following Paul Ricoeur's discussion of this distinction,[49] the "sense" of a text will refer to "what is said" to the reader via the internal organization of discourse in the text. The sense of a sentence emerges in the basic

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[49]Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), pp. 19-22.

predicative relation. Thus, by correlating subject and predicate, a sentence comes to "make sense" to the reader.

The referent of a text will refer to that toward which the discourse is finally directed. "We distinguish what is said from about what it is said."[50] Thus a text or sentence not only has internal coherence and sense but also refers to something beyond itself. "Whereas the sense is immanent to the discourse, . . .the reference expresses the movement in which language transcends itself. . . .the reference relates language to the world."[51]

In the discussion of "emptiness," it has been necessary to distinguish between emptiness (<u>k'ung</u> or <u>li</u>) as a concept and as a symbol. This interpretation maintains that emptiness functions in both capacities. These capacities, however, are only artificially distinct since in its true religious context the two are inseparable.

As a concept, emptiness is a means of grasping reality through the process of reflective thinking. The content of the concept emptiness can be defined in terms of related concepts such as dependent origination, own-being, and so on. Thus, the meaning of the concept emptiness is the lack of independent, autonomous being.

In addition to its conceptual content, "emptiness" has a symbolic dimension that refers to something beyond what can be conceptually grasped and articulated. "Symbol" as used here refers

[50] Ibid., p. 20. [51] Ibid.

to a literal obvious meaning which, in addition, evokes a further meaning that is available only through the initial meaning.[52] It is through the original, literal meaning of a word or a thing that a "surplus of meaning"[53] is attained. A symbol directs one beyond the initial meaning by "suggesting" or "evoking" an additional signification.

> A symbol is the movement of the primary meaning which makes us participate in the latent meaning and thus assimilates us to that which is symbolized without our being able to master the similitude intellectually. It is in this sense that the symbol is donative; it is donative because it is a primary intentionality that gives the second meaning analogically.[54]

Furthermore, a religious symbol can be differentiated from other symbols in that its referent is experienced ecstatically in the breakdown of the conventional separation of subject and object.[55] Thus, "emptiness" has a symbolic dimension if its literal, conceptual meaning functions to direct one beyond that meaning to a further, religious referent. (This discussion is taken up most explicitly in Chapter III, section 1.)

[52] Ibid., pp. 45-69, and Paul Ricoeur, Symbolism of Evil (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 10-18, 347-57.

[53] Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 45.

[54] Ricoeur, Symbolism of Evil, p. 16.

[55] Robert Scharlemann, manuscript of class lectures from "Theological Questions I," 1978 (transcribed from tapes by David E. Klemm), p. 227.

This dissertation is based upon a study of the following texts of Fa-tsang:

Hua-yen i ch'êng chiao i fên-ch'i chang or Wu-chiao chang (Treatise on the Five Teachings) T. 45 (1866), pp. 477-509.

Hua-yen-i-hai pai-mên (One Hundred Entrances to the Sea of Meaning in the Hua-yen Sutra) T. 45 (1875), pp. 627-36.

Shou Hua-yen ao chih wang-chin huan-yüan kuan (Cultivating the Mysterious Meaning of the Hua-yen Sūtra: The Contemplation Through Which Falsity is Extinguished and One Returns to the Source) T. 45 (1876), pp. 637-41.

Hua-yen fa p'u-t'i-hsin chang (Essay on the Manifestation of Enlightened Mind in the Hua-yen Sūtra) T. 45 (1878), pp. 651-56.

Chin-shih-tzŭ-chang (Essay on the Golden Lion) T. 45 (1880;1881), pp. 663-67; 667-70.

Pan-jo po-lo-mi-to hsin ching lüeh shu (Brief Commentary on the Sūtra of the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom) T. 33 (1712), pp. 552-55.

In addition, specific questions have led to the study of relevant sections in the following texts:

Ta-ch'êng ch'i-hsin lun i-chi (Record of the Meaning of the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna) T. 44 (1846), pp. 251-59, 267-72, 282.

Hua-yen ching t'an hsüan chi (Record of the Search for the Mystery in the Hua-yen Sūtra) T. 35 (1733), pp. 405-408.

Shih-êrh mên lun tsung-chih i-chi (Record of the Meaning of the Fundamental Doctrines of the Twelve Topic Treatise) T. 42 (1826), pp. 220-25.[56]

[56]The following English translations of Fa-tsang's works are available:

W.T. Chan, A treatise on the Golden Lion, and portions of One Hundred Gates to the Sea of Ideas in the Flowery Splendor Scripture, in A Sourcebook of Chinese Philosophy.

Francis Cook, Fa-tsang's Treatise on the Five Doctrines (Ann Arbor:

All quotations from and references to traditional Chinese Buddhist literature are derived from the Taiwan reprint of the Taisho Tripitaka. All such references are given in the following manner: T. = Taisho, followed by volume number, followed by a number indicating page and either a, b, or c, to indicate top, middle, or bottom column of that page. Thus T. 45, p. 346b refers to Volume 45, page 346, middle column. All translations from the Chinese are our own, unless otherwise indicated.

The romanization of Chinese characters follows the traditional Wade-Giles system. A list at the end of this dissertation relates the romanized Chinese words to the appropriate Chinese characters. Entries are listed alphabetically.

University Microfilms).

Francis Cook, "Fa-tsang's Brief Commentary on the Heart Sutra," in M. Kiyota, Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978).

Wm. Theodore De Bary, portions of The Treatise on the Golden Lion, in The Buddhist Tradition (New York: Modern Library, 1969).

Small segments of several texts are also found in G.C.C. Chang, The Buddhist Teaching of Totality.

# II

# EMPTINESS IN THE THOUGHT OF FA-TSANG

For Fa-tsang, as for the majority of Mahāyāna philosophers, emptiness (<u>k'ung/śūnyatā</u>) is the primary concept and symbol. Its relation to other doctrinal elements is constituted by at least one of two possibilities. Either emptiness is the basis on which other concepts take form and enter the system of thought, or emptiness is the norm to which all previously existing or more autonomous concepts must, in the end, conform. The importance of a well-founded understanding of emptiness (<u>k'ung</u>) for an adequate understanding of Fa-tsang's system of thought as a whole, or for any particular aspect of it, is paramount. The purpose of this chapter is to lay that foundation by rendering a detailed interpretation of the concept of emptiness as it appears in selected texts of Fa-tsang. Although Fa-tsang identifies other symbols with emptiness, this chapter will be restricted to an analysis of "<u>k'ung</u>," which is the most important of these because it is the symbol used to translate the Sanskrit <u>śūnyatā</u> and because its univocal meaning is emptiness. This chapter will describe, as far as such a description is possible, both the sense and significance of <u>k'ung</u> within Fa-tsang's texts.

An interpretation of the concept/symbol emptiness (<u>k'ung</u>) in the texts of Fa-tsang can be legitimately structured in any

number of different ways. Previous accounts of Fa-tsang's understanding of emptiness have each adopted structures for their interpretations that, varying somewhat from one another, have led to rather different interpretations of emptiness. Apart from variant presuppositions in the interpreters themselves, the most important reason why different interpretations are possible or even likely is that Fa-tsang's concept of emptiness was formulated in view of many centuries of development of that concept in both India and China. That is to say, since Fa-tsang had at his disposal a vast and sophisticated tradition concerning "emptiness," he could, and did, draw on many varying interpretations within the breadth of that tradition to formulate a concept of emptiness that is multi-faceted and extremely complex. One criterion for adequacy that should apply to any interpretation of emptiness is that it must develop the multiple connotations of the meaning of "emptiness," as well as relate them so that the interpretation can be shown to be applicable and appropriate to any occurrence of that concept within the textual corpus.

The present analysis will adopt a general structure which is based on three separate senses of the character <u>k'ung</u> (emptiness) in the texts of Fa-tsang. This general structure is to our mind presupposed or implied in any appearance of the symbol <u>k'ung</u> in the Fa-tsang texts under consideration, yet is never fully explicated in exactly this manner in any of them. This discrepancy, the fact that the structure developed by this analysis is not

identical with the explicit discussion of emptiness in Fa-tsang's texts, can be justified by noting the differences between the nature of the present discussion and that of Fa-tsang's texts. In Fa-tsang's texts there appears to be no concern to illuminate the structure and context of his use of k'ung. Instead, the texts express a concern to "apply" emptiness, to project it into a particular situation or context in such a way that its referent may be elicited. Ultimately, the concern of the texts is with the realization of "emptiness," not with a reflexive analysis of the overall structure of arguments employed to that end. However, from the perspective of our present concern, an interpretation of the sense and significance of Fa-tsang's concept of emptiness, it is necessary to clarify the overall structure of the complex use of k'ung and the context within which it is expressed.

This structure is presupposed and implied in Fa-tsang's use of emptiness (k'ung) even though he never isolates or refers to the structure itself. The general structure that has been developed here is the result of isolating and comparing the various contexts and senses of the symbol k'ung, and then examining the ways in which they are related to one another. In collating the various contexts in which the symbol k'ung is found, three general types of context and three corresponding senses of the concept have emerged. These three senses are dealt with in a sequential progression from the most elementary to the most profound, a progression presupposed in the texts themselves in that for Fa-tsang the bodhisattva must

progress from the first to the third and final meaning of "emptiness." One additional step, the first, has been added to these three because it serves as the presupposition or necessary condition for entertaining any meaning of emptiness at all.

This fourfold general structure can be briefly outlined as follows:

(1) The analysis of human existence and its "unsatisfactory" nature to which k'ung constitutes an answer.

(2) The predication that all phenomenal forms are empty (k'ung).

(3) The breakthrough of emptiness (k'ung) in which all form is exhausted.

(4) The realization of "true emptiness" (chēn-k'ung) in which one realizes that form is emptiness and emptiness is form.

Human Existence and the

Context of the Doctrine of Emptiness

The doctrine of emptiness (k'ung), like all other doctrines in Fa-tsang's system of thought, is formulated as a response to the unsatisfactoriness of ordinary human existence.[1] Fa-tsang metaphorically describes the realization of emptiness (k'ung) as the remedy (yao) that is effective (i.e., has meaning and significance) only in relation to that for which it is a remedy, the specific ailment (ping).[2] Therefore our analysis of the meaning of emptiness must begin here, with the existential situation into which "emptiness" is projected rather than directly with the

[1] T. 45, p. 639a.  [2] T. 45, p. 634b.

doctrine itself. The unsatisfactory nature of existence is a necessary presupposition for the quest for a new mode of existence through the concept/symbol emptiness. Therefore, we must first ask: What is the question to which "emptiness" constitutes an adequate answer?

One assumption that underlies Fa-tsang's writings, as well as the texts of the Buddhist tradition in general, is that ordinary existence as normally experienced by all human beings is inadequate, and that its inadequacy is evident to any reflective person. Life is universally and vividly experienced as suffering or affliction (k'u/duḥkha).[3]

Indian Buddhist texts discussed the nature of human existence in terms of the Sanskrit term "saṃsāra," literally meaning "to wander through (or pass through) intensely." Human beings were thought to be in the beginningless process of "wandering through" perpetual cycles of birth and death, each permeated by varying intensities of suffering. The Chinese term most often used to translate the Sanskrit "saṃsāra" is the linguistic compound "shêng-ssŭ"-- two characters, the literal sense of which is birth/death or origination/cessation.

For Fa-tsang, the implications inherent within the ordinary experience of birth and death are truly indicative of existential unsatisfactoriness. Origination and cessation, birth and death,

[3] T. 45, p. 639a.

is the one process through which all beings move. Particular beings continually come into existence and pass out of existence dependent upon factors beyond themselves. Temporality and change are characteristic of all existing beings. Indian Buddhist texts had referred to this characteristic as impermanence (anitya), which was considered to be one of three fundamental marks or characteristics (lakṣaṇa) of existence.[4] For those who dwell within the experience of saṃsāra, this entire process of temporal, impermanent origination and cessation is experienced as a negative process since whatever originates (shêng) is inevitably destroyed (ssŭ).

This negative element in existence provides the link between "birth and death" (shêng-ssŭ/saṃsāra) and suffering (k'u/duḥkha).[5] In the simplest of terms, suffering arises due to human ignorance of the impermanent nature of existence. This ignorance (wu-ming/avidya) gives rise to human attachment to or holding onto that which is inherently impermanent and, therefore, ungraspable. Attachment here has both a positive and negative form.[6] Defined positively, attachment is desire, craving, and attraction; defined negatively, attachment is fear, hatred, and revulsion. Suffering results from the unfounded expectation that objects of desire remain permanently existent, and that objects of hatred remain

[4]Edward Conze, Buddhist Thought in India (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 34.

[5]T. 45, p. 636a. [6]T. 45, p. 651c.

permanently nonexistent. Since, as Fa-tsang claims, existence is impermanence, any form of attachment necessarily leads to suffering.[7]

Suffering is not, however, the direct result of the impermanent process of origination and cessation through which all beings move; rather, it is the result of existing inappropriately in relation to that process.[8] Suffering results from human ignorance of and attachment to that which is impermanent and changing. Fa-tsang's discussion of human existence places the emphasis on the subject, upon both the mental and emotional processes that serve to perpetuate saṃsāra. Within the subjective processes of delusion there are, in the texts, two interrelated components. These components are interrelated in such a way that each seems to be a condition for the arising of the other; that is, neither is clearly logically prior to the other.

The first of these components is emotive or affective forces (ch'ing).[9] These forces have a tendency to become compulsions that obscure one's evaluation of the world and one's relation to it. This is the driving force behind both positive and negative attachments, attraction and revulsion. These internal affective compulsions cast over reality a veil (the net of Māra)[10] that obscures one's understanding of both the world and one's actual

[7]T. 45, p. 633c (emphasis mine). [8]T. 45, p. 634b.

[9]T. 45, p. 670c. [10]T. 45, p. 634b.

situation within it. It is in this sense that affective illusion (*ch'ing*) is a condition for the arising of the second component of delusion, that of differentiation or conceptual illusion (*fên-pieh*).[11] Affective forces (*ch'ing*) perpetuate and solidify the conceptual distinctions that form the net of illusions and the experience of saṃsāra. On the other hand, some conceptual discrimination must be present as a condition for affective forces in that emotional attachment presupposes some distinct entity to which one becomes attached. The interrelation is such that each presupposes the other; they are simultaneously present as two components within the process of delusion.

It is the second of these two components, conceptual illusion (*fên-pieh*), that Fa-tsang's discussion tends to focus upon.[12] Here we find two types of, or perhaps more appropriately, two aspects of, conceptual illusion. These two correspond to the basic subject/object division. The first is conceptual illusion, or error, with regard to the nature of the world, the objective. In this case illusion is created and sustained by the inveterate tendency of the human mind to make clearly defined distinctions between "things" (*shih*)[13] in the world. Reified distinctions cause delusion and consequently suffering. By "reified distinction" is meant any

[11]T. 45, p. 628c. [12]T. 45, p. 628c.

[13]"Shih" denotes any concrete, particular phenomenon, whether that is a thing, an idea, or state of affairs.

distinct phenomenon that is judged both to exist independently and to be permanently what it presently appears to be. It is the attribution of a permanent self-nature (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva) to that which is distinguished by consciousness.[14]

One ontological condition that ultimately renders "discrimination" an illusion is that reality is continually in process.[15] Phenomena neither exist independently nor remain in their current state of existence. And this fact, according to Fa-tsang, makes it inappropriate to hypostatize any "state of existence" at all. Since there are no static entities or bases in existence, Fa-tsang can claim that ". . .if one calculates that there is a state of coming and a state of going, this is delusion."[16] Static thinking obscures what is actually involved in experience.

If phenomena are considered to be permanent, self-sufficient entities, then they are said to "conceal" (yin) the true nature of reality.[17] And when reality is concealed in this way, that is, when one reifies the impermanent flow of existence or when one attempts to "fix" (ting) the impermanent factors of existence as independent, self-sufficient entities, then one is involved in forms of attachment that perpetuate further attachment and thus suffering. This mode of conceptualizing that produces and sustains existence in saṃsāra is often called "the nature of illusion" or

[14] T. 45, p. 668c.

[15] T. 45, p. 668b.

[16] T. 45, p. 636a.

[17] T. 45, p. 653b.

"discrimination nature" (fên-pieh hsing/parikalpita), drawing on a term from earlier Yogācāra texts.[18] "That which the deluded mind grasps is considered to exist, marks and origination are taken to be real, as to that (type of discrimination) we refer to it as the nature of illusion."[19]

When, in his discussion of the ordinary deluded awareness of "birth and death" (shêng-ssŭ/saṃsāra), Fa-tsang draws on the Yogācāra (wei-shih) category of parikalpita, his purpose is generally to raise the question of the role of the mind in constituting the experience of the world. Mind and its object are interrelated in such a way that neither exists autonomously or independently.[20] The failure to recognize this engenders the tendency to hypostatize an absolute self-sufficiency (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva) to phenomena or objects of experience as if they existed in themselves, independent of the mind's recognition of them. "To consider that there are elements (fa/dharma) outside the mind is the nature of illusion

[18] T. 45, p. 634ab.

[19] T. 45, p. 668b. Fa-tsang occasionally adopts the Yogācāra doctrine of the "three natures" (trisvabhāva) to clarify his position as he has done here by referring to the "nature of illusion" (parikalpita). Like the Mahāyāna idea of the two truths, the trisvabhava doctrine functions to indicate the nature of truth and the nature of illusion as well as the difference and relation between them. Although that is also its function in the texts of Fa-tsang, it has been adopted in a freely innovative way. See Cook, Hua-yen Buddhism, pp. 56-61.

[20] T. 45, p. 640a.

(fên-pieh hsing/parikalpita)."[21] This kind of absolute subject/object opposition gives rise to either attraction or aversion, both of which are forms of attachment that bind one to a life in which origination and cessation (shêng-ssŭ/saṃsāra) are experienced as suffering (k'u/duḥkha).

The second of the two aspects of conceptual illusion is precisely illusion or error concerning the nature of the self, the subject (wo/ātman)[22] rather than error with regard to objective reality. In his discussion of this aspect, Fa-tsang has drawn on texts from all periods of the Buddhist tradition, from the Chinese Āgamas (the early, pre-Mahāyāna Buddhist texts at his disposal) to Yogācāra and Chinese Buddhist discussions of the self. Fa-tsang's texts maintain that an inadequate or deluded self-understanding generates attachments and suffering as readily as does an inadequate understanding of the world. If the objective illusion is to project an independent, permanent nature onto phenomena, the illusion with regard to self-understanding is no different.[23] If one understands oneself to be a permanent agent, independent of the world within which one finds oneself, then one's self-conception becomes a source of delusion and suffering. This reified self-understanding, which for Fa-tsang is universal among human beings, puts the self in a position of opposition to the world, which

[21] T. 45, p. 668b.

[22] T. 45, p. 628b.

[23] T. 45, p. 628b.

naturally gives rise to both attraction and aversion—two forms of attachment.

The notion of an independent "self" implies that the world stands in opposition to the self, and that one is necessarily limited by that opposition. But rather than leading to a revision of one's self-understanding, this limiting relationship between the self and the world causes a stance of further self-centeredness that becomes manifest in grasping, craving (ai/tanha),[24] and a desire to absorb whatever stands in opposition to oneself. Whatever cannot be absorbed or assimilated becomes an object of negative attachment: fear, hatred and revulsion. In both cases the notion of an autonomous, permanent self leads to delusion and attachment.

It should be noted here that the similarity between the conceptual illusion concerning the world and that concerning the self is not accidental; they are identical in nature and one does not exist without the other. In both cases the error entails the projection of "own-being" (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva), which includes the attributes of both permanence and independence. To attribute these characteristics to one side of the subject/object relation is to imply the same of the other side. It is one conceptual illusion that, nevertheless, is dealt with in two related aspects corresponding to the subject/object distinction. Although for Fa-tsang these illusions constitute the ailment (ping) or human predicament,

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[24]T. 45, p. 633c.

the doctrines of emptiness (k'ung/śūnyatā) and "no-self" (wu-wo/anātman) constitute the remedy (yao).[25]

The foregoing discussion has isolated the fundamental components of Fa-tsang's evaluation of the human predicament, affective forces (ch'ing) and two forms of conceptual illusion (fên-pieh). These components constitute the "nature of illusion." Fa-tsang also draws on two other Indian concepts to help account for two contradictory yet necessary features of his system of thought: first, that saṃsāra seems to be universal, self-perpetuating, and inescapable;[26] and, second, that despite this appearance, its negativities can be removed in the experience of enlightenment (p'u-t'i/bodhi).[27]

First, the concept of karma (ye)[28] is drawn into the discussion to indicate that the negativities of saṃsāra have originated dependent on one's own activities and state of mind. Grasping, craving, hatred—all forms of attachment--engender and accumulate karma that, when it comes to fruition, further perpetuates attachment and, accordingly, suffering. Activities that arise out of bondage create inertia for more bondage. Attachment, which causes the continual production and accumulation of karma, becomes the "oppressive force of birth and death."[29] And since deluded existence is beginningless and universal,[30] it appears to perpetuate itself

[25]T. 45, p. 639a. [26]T. 45, p. 639a.

[28]T. 45, p. 633c. [29]T. 45, p. 670c. [30]T. 45, p. 668b.

and to cancel all attempt to transcend the negativities of existence. Suffering appears to be inescapable. Fa-tsang notes this appearance when he writes, "When one has fallen into the sea of suffering, there is no means to get out."[31]

However, according to Fa-tsang, saṃsāra (shêng-ssŭ) is not self-existent despite its appearance to that effect. In fact he claims that the negative limitations of saṃsāra are self-imposed and impermanent and therefore can be removed.[32] The Indian concept that he draws heavily on for this discussion, as well as others, is the notion of dependent origination (yüan-ch'i/pratītyasamutpāda). Saṃsāra originates dependent on one's own attachments; it originates dependent on one's affective and conceptual illusions.[33] If these illusions and attachments, which are also not self-existent, are reversed or eliminated, the suffering of saṃsāra will be alleviated.

Presupposed in the entire discussion is that the bondage implied in the self-perpetuation of karma is not so exhaustive that the truth (fa/dharma) will not reverse the illusions that are productive of suffering. The human situation is a self-imposed, conditional bondage (fu) which can therefore be remedied. The truth (fa/dharma) shatters illusions and guides one to an existence that is appropriate to the true nature of reality (chên-ju/tathatā).

[31]T. 45, p. 640a. [32]T. 45, p. 639a. [33]T. 45, p. 627b.

In summary, for Fa-tsang, the human situation known as birth and death (*shêng-ssŭ*/*saṃsāra*) is a process that is self-imposed and self-destructive, yet universal among human beings. Its limitations and negativities arise out of affective and conceptual attachments that serve to perpetuate the experience, common to all human beings, that life is suffering.

## Form is Empty (*k'ung*)

The most important element in the solution to or remedy (*yao*) for the "ailment" (*ping*) inherent in human existence (*shêng-ssŭ*/*saṃsāra*) is the assertion that all phenomena are empty (*k'ung*/*śūnya*). This assertion is the conclusion of, and principal element within, an explicitly prescribed method that functions to dispel attachment to phenomena and alleviate the "unsatisfactoriness" (*k'u*/*duḥkha*) of human existence. This initial function of the symbol *k'ung* is its power of criticism that, when applied or directed to any phenomenon, serves to question or to dislodge the autonomous existence of that phenomenon. By calling the assumed independence and autonomy (i.e., "self-nature"/*tzŭ-hsing*) of each phenomenon into question, one begins to examine critically the situation within which attachments arise and suffering prevails. The effect that this method initially seeks to elicit is to create a reflective, critical attitude toward that which appears in experience, so that one can see that the absolute qualities such as autonomy and permanence that one has unconsciously attributed to individual

phenomena are in actuality illusory (and binding) projections.

The method entails a complex series of arguments that, if they are successful, conclude with the understanding that the phenomenon is empty. K'ung therefore negates or questions the original and naive interpretation of appearance through analytical means, and calls for its reinterpretation and reevaluation. By means of a series of arguments clearly modeled after Nāgārjuna and the Mādhyamika school,[34] the initial interpretation and understanding of experience is gradually negated by calling into question various aspects of that experience that had hitherto remained unquestioned.

Fa-tsang formulates this questioning process at two different levels. Formulated ontologically, he questions any conventional understanding of phenomena that presupposes the presence of "self-nature" (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva).[35] In this way he asserts that any phenomenon within one's experience is empty and impermanent. Formulated epistemologically, Fa-tsang questions the means of knowing any particular phenomenon. Here he argues that the interrelation between objects of experience and the mental interpretive process through which the objects are known obstructs an immediate access to the "self-nature" of any phenomenon.[36] These two formulations of the question initiate the student into the activity of looking

[34] In his commentary on the Mādhyamika Śāstra, The Twelve Topic Treatise (Shih-erh men lun), Fa-tsang's style and methods are very similar to the original text. T. 42 (1826).

[35] T. 45, p. 628a. [36] T. 45, p. 628c.

critically both at the world and at the linguistic and conceptual structures through which one knows and comes to understand the world. In either case the student is forced to "step back" from the initial and naive acceptance of any phenomenon in order to re-evaluate it. These reflective processes drive toward the realization that truth can be and commonly is concealed (yin) by an undisciplined interpretation of what appears in experience.[37]

Drawing on a common motif in Mahāyāna texts, Fa-tsang compares the facade of phenomenal appearance to the image in a mirror.[38] What one initially understands to be a concrete, substantial object is revealed, on closer scrutiny, to be a reflection of some further state of affairs. Through gradual analysis one is forced to abandon, or at least to qualify, an interpretation that had previously appeared to be obvious and unquestionable. All of this process is finally directed toward the realization that the phenomenal object in question is empty (k'ung).

The question of concern at this point, therefore, is "What does it specifically mean to assert that a phenomenon is empty (k'ung/śūnya)?" That is, what are the sense and connotations of that predication?

As the answer to this question unfolds, it will become apparent that the meaning of the symbol "k'ung" as it appears in the grammatical position of predicate adjective in Fa-tsang's texts is

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[37] T. 45, p. 653b. [38] T. 45, p. 633c.

very much similar to the meaning of śūnya in Mādhyamika texts. In this primary aspect of the articulation of his position (the first of three meanings of k'ung), Fa-tsang is the least innovative. Here he draws freely and heavily on various methods of argumentation that, by his time, had been collected and handed down as textual tradition in both India and China for many centuries. In post-Kumārajīva China, interest in Mādhyamika and Prajñāpāramitā texts eventually crystallized into one significant school of thought, the San-lun (three treatise) school, a group of scholar/monks dedicated to the translation and propagation of Indian śūnyāvāda texts, and to the understanding and appropriation of their content.[39]

The original San-lun monks, who were dedicated to be as faithful to the Indian tradition as possible, worked diligently to

[39]The Chinese San-lun (three treatise) school was organized around translations of three basic Indian Mādhyamika śāstras:

(1) The Middle Treatise (Chung-lun, T. 1564), was Kumārajīva's translation (409 A.D.) of the Mādhyamika śāstra, a Sanskrit commentary on Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamikakārikās. This text became the Chinese Sangha's primary access to Nāgārjuna's most important work, as the Chung-lun contains the Kārikas embedded within it.

(2) The Twelve Topic Treatise (Shih-erh-men lun, T. 1568), was Kumārajīva's translation (409 A.D.) of the Dvadaśa-muknu śāstra, a text whose Sanskrit original is now unknown. Fa-tsang wrote a lengthy commentary on this treatise.

(3) The Hundred Treatise (Pai-lun, T. 1569) was Kumārajīva's translation of the Sanskrit Śata Śāstra which is a commentary on some stanzas by Āryadeva. A fourth treatise came to be valued by the school at least as much as these original three texts. This was the Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise (Ta chih tu lun, T. 1509), a commentary on the Pañcavimśati Sāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā sūtra, translated by Kumārajīva in 404.

re-present the Mādhyamika/Prajñāpāramitā arguments and aura in the Chinese language and textual milieu. Fa-tsang freely imitates their style, vocabulary, and structure of argument. In addition, he has quoted their texts with great frequency and respect.[40]

Drawing on this vast and extremely complex tradition, Fa-tsang has incorporated many related but variant connotations of meaning into the sense of the predication "k'ung." First, the assertion that something is empty (k'ung) is based on what Fa-tsang and other Mahāyāna Buddhists claim to be a universally observable characteristic of all phenomena. This observation is that all phenomena originate dependently (yüan-ch'i/pratītyasamutpāda). That is, all phenomena come into existence (ch'i) dependent (yüan) on conditions beyond themselves. Whatever originates has its existence on the basis of a multitude of conditioning forces. As was the case with Nāgārjuna[41] and other Mahāyānists, Fa-tsang has taken the doctrine of dependent origination (yüan-ch'i/pratītyasamutpāda) to be the

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[40]Although Fa-tsang was proficient in Sanskrit, enough to allow him to participate in imperially supported translation projects, in his own writings, he generally quotes the most popular and authoritative Chinese translations of his time.

[41]The most important statement of this identity in Nāgārjuna is found in MulaMādhyamikakārikās, 24:19: "Since there is no dharma whatever originating independently, No dharma whatever exists which is not empty." Frederick J. Streng, Emptiness, A Study in Religious Meaning (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 213.

most important basis for the claim that phenomena are empty (k'ung/śūnya).[42]

This identity between "k'ung" and "dependent origination" lends several important connotations to the sense of the predication that phenomena are empty. One connotation derives from the meaning of "dependency" in dependent origination. To say that something is empty is to imply that it is dependent, conditioned, and finite. Anything that is dependent on factors beyond itself is limited or conditioned by those factors. Any phenomenon that originates dependently is relative to all conditions for its existence and therefore no absolute or unconditioned quality can legitimately be ascribed to it. As will be demonstrated in Chapter III below, Fa-tsang's texts maintain that all phenomena exist within a complex network of relations, each phenomenon dependent on all others which serve as conditions for its existence.[43] Stcherbatsky's famous translation of śūnyatā as "relativity"[44] is, within the context of this initial sense of k'ung, quite appropriate. Any phenomenon is conditioned by and relative to those factors on which its origination and existence depends. The predicate k'ung, therefore, connotes dependency and relativity.

[42]Fa-tsang's treatment of the doctrine of dependent origination, which is crucial to his system of thought, will also be dealt with in Chapter III, sections 1 and 2.

[43]T. 45, p. 653b.

[44]Th. Stcherbatsky, The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1968).

Another important connotation that derives from the fact that the predicate k'ung is based on dependent origination is that an empty phenomenon is impermanent (wu-chang/anitya).[45] Here the emphasis is placed on the second word in the compound yüan-ch'i, dependent origination. Whatever originates or comes into existence also passes out of existence. No originated phenomenon exists in a permanent or static way. K'ung, therefore, is closely linked to the notion of impermanence, which in the early Pali suttas is one of the three essential characteristics (lakṣaṇa) of existence. That all existing phenomena are empty implies that they are also characterized by impermanence and temporality. The temporal, impermanent nature of existence was for Fa-tsang a prominent topic (mên) for meditation as it had been in many earlier schools of Buddhist practice. This topic of meditation is employed by Fa-tsang to guide one toward the realization that all phenomena are empty (k'ung).

The most basic element in the sense of the assertion that X is empty is derived by Fa-tsang from this link between k'ung and dependent origination. All phenomena that originate dependently lack self-nature (tzŭ-hsing) or own-being (svabhāva).[46] To say that X is empty is to deny that it has self-nature. According to Fa-tsang and the mainstream of the Chinese Buddhist tradition, self-nature (tzŭ-hsing) is the equivalent to and the appropriate

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[45] T. 45, p. 628b.

[46] T. 45, p. 638a.

translation for svabhāva (own-being). For Fa-tsang, lack of self-nature means that the phenomenon in question lacks independent, autonomous being. It means that it does not possess its own power to be so that its origination and cessation are externally conditioned rather than self-determined.[47]

For Fa-tsang, the lack of self-nature in a phenomenon can be logically derived from the observation that it originates dependently. Whatever originates and is dependent is not permanent and autonomous (tzŭ-hsing). Fa-tsang explicitly makes notes of this logical progression quite often, as in the Hua-yen i hai pai-mên, where he writes, "Since (the phenomenon) originates from dependent conditions, therefore, it has no self-nature, therefore, it is empty (k'ung)."[48]

Since to be empty means to possess no independent, permanent "self-nature," a further implication drawn in Fa-tsang's texts is that the phenomenon is also lacking in any distinguishing characteristics or marks (hsiang).[49] Lack of permanent self-nature implies lack of permanent, distinguishing characteristics. In Fa-tsang's "meditation on marklessness" in the Hua-yen i hai pai-mên, he explains this aspect of k'ung by claiming that the phenomenal characteristics distinguished by the mind

> are falsely established and have no reality. Now if one is not attached, then one knows that the object's marks are empty and non-existent. That

[47]T. 42, p. 226a. [48]T. 45, p. 631c. [49]T. 45, p. 627c.

> which arises from the mind and is understood to be without self-nature is called "lack of marks." The sūtra says: As to all dharmas, their original nature is empty, and they lack even the most insignificant mark.[50]

Any distinguishable mark or characteristic of an entity is empty, then, in the sense that it is relative and impermanent. No distinction, according to Fa-tsang, is justified unconditionally.

It is quite common in his writing for Fa-tsang to assert of a certain phenomenon that it is "empty, and does not exist" (k'ung wu so yu).[51] In a highly specialized sense of the word, "nonexistence" is one connotation of the meaning of the predicate k'ung. This is not a nihilistic element in Fa-tsang, nor is it the equivalent of the Taoist ontologically primary "Nonbeing" (wu); rather it is simply a restatement of the above discussion in a more radical form. If a phenomenon is dependent, impermanent, relative, and lacking all distinguishing characteristics, then there is nothing to establish "it" as an existent entity.[52] To be truly existent, according to the canons of Mādhyamika logic, a phenomenon must have "own-being" (svabhāva). And as we have seen, own-being (svabhāva) or self-nature (tzŭ-hsing) implies unconditional, permanent being. Therefore, nonexistence (wu so yu), although it is purposefully left unqualified in most contexts, requires the

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[50] T. 45, p. 627c.

[51] Literally, "empty, there is not that which exists."

[52] T. 45, p. 633c.

conceptual qualification that to be truly existent an entity must be absolutely self-empowered and self-contained. Any entity lacking unconditional self-nature is, in this sense, declared to be nonexistent.

Another similar way in which Fa-tsang establishes the basis for the predicate k'ung is through the assertion that all phenomena derive from the mind (hsin).[53] There are various and extremely important ways in which the meaning of "mind only" (wei-hsin) is formulated. In this context, however, the meaning is explicit and definite. A phenomenon is said to be "mind only" in the sense that the existence of the phenomenon obtains only on the basis of its being distinguished by the mind. Any phenomenon of experience exists as such because it has been differentiated out of an original formless identity.[54] The significance of this point is that the phenomenal world in which one lives is differentiated and mediated to conscious awareness through the activities of the mind. The world of phenomena originates dependent (yüan-ch'i/pratītyasamutpāda) on the mind;[55] whatever originates dependently lacks unconditional and autonomous being (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva); whatever lacks self-nature

[53] T. 45, p. 628c.

[54] Fa-tsang makes this point in one text by saying, ". . .all existing dharmas of the three realms are only created by the One Mind. Outside the mind, there is not one dharma that can be obtained. Therefore we speak of returning to mind. This refers to the fact that all distinctions have derived from one's own mind." T. 45, p. 640a.

[55] T. 45, p. 628c.

(tzŭ-hsing) or own-being (svabhāva) is empty. This basis and connotation of k'ung guarantees its status as a universal predicate. Since all phenomena must be distinguished by the mind to exist at all, and since all phenomena that originate dependent on mental activity are, for that reason, empty, therefore all phenomena are empty.

Furthermore, on the basis of the foregoing discussion the predicate k'ung can be seen to carry an emotive force that adds a further connotation to its meaning. To claim that phenomena are empty (k'ung), that is, to claim that they lack self-nature and are dependent, impermanent, relative, and so on, is to make the claim to one who desires and is attached that phenomena are unworthy objects of craving or desire[56] and that they are inadequate bases for attachment.[57] Fa-tsang expresses this in a traditional manner by saying that phenomena are "infected" or "impure" (kou-jan).[58] The realization that a phenomenon is empty functions to eliminate it as a source of attachment and, on that basis, to free oneself from a relationship that inevitably results in both bondage and suffering.

One aspect of the relation between Fa-tsang's symbol k'ung and the early Buddhist concerns expressed in the Four Noble Truths becomes clear at this point. The understanding that phenomena are empty (k'ung) is one means to alleviate suffering through the

[56]T. 45, p. 669ab. [57]T. 45, p. 655c. [58]T. 45, p. 638c.

elimination of its cause which is desire, craving (ai/tanha). This is achieved through the realization that empty phenomena are undesirable and ungraspable; their lack of substantiality removes any basis for attachment.

All aspects of the above discussion of k'ung contribute to the negative force of that concept. The predication of k'ung implied a significant lack of value in the object. This is carried to its further extent at the point where one realizes that an empty phenomenon lacks even its own existence (in terms of an independent identity).[59] Therefore, it is not simply that phenomena are undesirable or "impure"; in view of k'ung, they begin to disappear even as possible sources of attachment. This initial sense of k'ung then, is its power to negate anything that can appear as a source of attachment and suffering.[60]

The question of the meaning of the assertion that an entity is empty having been answered, it is now appropriate to examine the texts asking: What is it that is declared to be empty, of what is k'ung prediated? The most common assertion in the Indian Prajñāpāramitā and Mādhyamika texts is that dharmas (elements) are (śūnya) which includes such classifications of dharmas as skandhas,

[59] T. 45, p. 633b.

[60] It is important to note at this point that we are following the progression of thought as found in the texts of Fa-tsang. The conclusions that emerge in the early stages of this progression are not final, but remain open to further development. For example, the above conclusion that k'ung is a negation of phenomena is itself dialectically negated as further implications of that position emerge.

āyatanas, dhātus.[61] In the early Buddhist tradition, dharmas were the most fundamental elements of experience that could be isolated in meditation. Dharma analysis was an explicitly prescribed system of criticism of appearance that sought to unreify both the self and objects in the world as they appear to deluded consciousness. An important task that the early Prajñāpāramitā and Mādhyamika texts undertook was to unreify the dharmas and the system of dharma analysis, which according to them, had become hypostatized into a new and more subtle form of delusion. The new method of critique that was established in these Mahāyāna texts, then, was superimposed, so to speak, on an already existing system of criticism.

In China the situation was different. There was no firmly established history or tradition of dharma analysis for which Fa-tsang could propose a reevaluation. Although the Indian texts that expounded the elaborate system of dharma analysis were introduced into China and translated centuries before Fa-tsang, dharma analysis never acquired the influence there that it had had in India. One significant reason for this fact is that the Mahāyāna critique of dharmas and dharma analysis arrived in China simultaneously with texts advocating the methods of dharma analysis.

[61] Frederick J. Streng, Emptiness, A Study in Religious Meaning (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), pp. 53-57. See also Edward Conze, Buddhist Wisdom Books (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1958), p. 85.

In view of the declaration that dharmas are empty, few monks engaged in the analytical methods of meditation on them.

Although this sense of the chara... fa (dharma) is not absent from Fa-tsang's texts, it has in many contexts been replaced by the character "shih," which denotes any particular object of human experience.[62] This includes all things, events, states of affairs, ideas, concepts, anything that can be distinguished at all, including dharmas. What is gained by this shift is that the predication of k'ung can then be made irrespective of the status of the hearer. In the case of shih it is not necessary to assume that objects have been reduced to more fundamental elements (dharmas) that are then declared to be empty. Any object of experience at any level of sophistication can be declared to be empty.

Thus, the most general category of subjects to which the predication "k'ung" is made is that of "shih." As attention is focused on any particular shih, the texts declare it to be empty. Fa-tsang typically begins by showing how a seemingly insignificant object, like a speck of dust, is empty.[63] Then, through the use of the same principles and criteria, he can show that a more substantial object of the same sort, a mountain, is also empty.[64] Despite the obvious differences between these two phenomena, their fundamental identity consists of their emptiness. Neither

[62]T. 45, p. 653c.

[63]T. 45, p. 627c.

[64]T. 45, p. 630b.

exists independently or autonomously, that is, neither a speck of dust nor a mountain possesses self-nature or own-being.

In addition to demonstrating that certain objects of experience are empty, Fa-tsang, following the examples of the Mādhyamika and San-lun schools, discusses the fact that activities are also empty. The activities of "coming" and "going" are both empty; neither has a self-nature.[65] Although objects appear to come and go, the dynamics of that very process undermines the possibility that there is a substantial, existing entity undertaking those activities. Since there is no entity that comes and goes, how can there be the activities of coming and going?

> When it comes, there is not that which comes. When it goes, also there is not that which goes. . . .On the basis of understanding that the going and coming of the object have no substance, therefore going and coming then are at the same time not going and coming.[66]

Then, turning to different kinds of shih, concepts and symbols, Fa-tsang declares any traditional Buddhist concept such as ātman (wo),[67] the skandhas (yün),[68] and karma (ye)[69] to be empty. But, more importantly, this is extended to include even those symbols that had traditionally signified sacred reality: bodhi (p'u t'i) and nirvāṇa (nieh-p'an), as well as "release" (chieh), and practice (hsing).[70] All concepts and symbols,

[65] T. 45, p. 636a. [66] T. 45, p. 628a. [67] T. 45, p. 628b.
[68] T. 45, p. 639a. [69] T. 45, p. 639bc. [70] T. 45, p. 632bc.

including Buddhist concepts and symbols, lack self-nature or own-being; their meaning is conditioned and dependent on the context of relations within which they stand. They are not themselves the truth to which they can point. Buddhist concepts and symbols are as empty as any others. Finally, to assert that anything distinguished at all is empty (k'ung) of self-nature (tzŭ-hsing), Fa-tsang adds an all-inclusive statement.

> Including all objects, all minute particles, all nations, lands, and seas, all Buddhas and all living beings, all phenomena (shih), all things etcetera, of these, there are none that are not empty (k'ung).[71]

If the assertion is made that "everything is empty," a further question may be asked of Fa-tsang, that is, is the predicate k'ung then itself empty? Does the universal negation of k'ung finally turn back on itself in self-denial? Fa-tsang's answer is clearly affirmative; k'ung is declared to be empty of self-nature: "As to 'emptiness' there is no self-nature" (k'ung wu tzŭ-hsing).[72] This is to say that the concept/symbol k'ung has no necessary, autonomous existence. Like all other forms (shih), its conceptual and symbolic content is relative and provisional. What is different about k'ung, however, is that it includes its own denial as part of its content. It makes reference to all phenomenal forms, including its own.

[71] T. 45, p. 636b.

[72] T. 45, p. 668b; see also T. 45, p. 630c, T. 45, p. 653bc.

This final claim, that k'ung is also empty, does not have the effect of cancelling the previous arguments and consequent negations that led up to the assertion that k'ung is empty. This final assertion is not thought to return one back to a naive and uncritical relation to phenomena. Rather, the self-negation of k'ung is the final negation in an all-inclusive sequence. Through self-denial, the possibility that the concept/symbol k'ung is itself the final goal of the foregoing process of analysis is rejected.[73] K'ung is identical with all other concepts and symbols; they are empty of unconditional content.

Although k'ung is the final symbol and concept in a provisional method directing one toward absolute truth (chên-t'i), it is not that truth in itself. The self-negating function of k'ung addresses the idolatrous possibilities inherent in the Hua-yen religious system. The concept/symbol k'ung denies its own unconditional status.[74] In the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras it is said that as the bodhisattva approaches emptiness (śūnyatā) he encounters feelings of fear and anxiety,[75] and that in this situation, the "skilled" bodhisattva resists the temptation to grasp for one final object of attachment or "basis," emptiness itself.[76] Fa-tsang

[73] T. 33, p. 553a. [74] T. 45, p. 668b.

[75] Edward Conze, trans., The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 320-21.

[76] Ibid., p. 298.

guards against this possibility by explicitly denying the reification of k'ung as one of three possible, and common, misunderstandings of emptiness.

> The third doubt is that emptiness (k'ung) is a thing (wu), and he seizes on emptiness as being an entity. Now (the sūtra) shows that emptiness is identical with form. One should not seize emptiness with emptiness.[77]

The possibility of this sort of reification or hypostatization is taken into account by the concept/symbol k'ung in its self-negating capacity. This self-negation is an attempt to avoid implicit claims to ultimacy on the part of k'ung itself. To hold onto or grasp for k'ung itself is a subtle form of attachment that nevertheless creates self-delusion like any other attachment. To this effect Fa-tsang claims, "If one creates a distant thought of emptiness, or marklessness, it still constitutes a deluded mind."[78] The concept emptiness can stand in the way of the realization of emptiness.[79]

In the process of the self-negation of k'ung, one is pushed beyond that concept/symbol. But beyond k'ung there remains no thing at all to grasp or to hold on to;[80] all entities are empty. The nonattachment or openness that may be achieved through this

[77] T. 33, p. 553a. This translation is from Cook, "Fa-tsang's Brief Commentary on the Heart Sutra," in M. Kiyota, ed., Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978), p. 190.

[78] T. 45, p. 636b. [79] T. 33, p. 553a.

[80] T. 45, p. 655c.

negative, critical function of k'ung is, according to Fa-tsang, the significance toward which this sense of that concept/symbol drives.

This critical process in which k'ung takes form as a universal predicate is the most important element in a process that Fa-tsang claims is gradual.[81] The process is gradual in that one moves from a single concrete phenomenal form (shih) or aspect of a form to another, gradually working toward the realization that all forms or aspects of form are empty including the concept "emptiness."[82] It is a cognitive process that follows a sequential, step-by-step development. In attempting to distinguish between sudden and gradual realization, Fa-tsang identifies the gradual as follows:

> If in the object one comprehends that its illusory form cannot be obtained, then one perceives that there is no form. If one comprehends that the object has no self-nature, then one perceives that there is no arising. If one comprehends that the object's form is without substance, then one perceives that it is empty (k'ung). If one investigates in this manner, then the perception is called gradual.[83]

For Fa-tsang, this gradual process cannot directly cause the goal, which is ultimate truth (chên-t'i/paramārtha-satya), to be realized. One cannot arrive at unconditional truth by gradually paring away conditioned forms of truth. This process could conceivably go on indefinitely. What it does accomplish, however, it to create an "opening" (of nongrasping) in deluded human consciousness through which ultimate truth may suddenly become

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[81] T. 45, p. 636a. [82] T. 45, p. 653c. [83] T. 45, p. 636ab.

manifest. The methods involved in the gradual, dialectical process of emptying all phenomenal form are preparatory in nature.[84]

It should be noted at this point that the process of realizing (<u>chêng</u>) that all forms are empty (<u>k'ung</u>) entails more than the verbal or textual assertion to that effect and its preceding dialectical arguments. Fa-tsang maintains the traditional Buddhist distinction between two basic aspects of the path. The texts distinguish between those methods involving cessation (<u>chih</u>/<u>śamatha</u>) and those involving contemplation (<u>kuan</u>/<u>vipaśyanā</u>).[85]

Cessation (<u>chih</u>) is the meditative practice of stilling or quieting the mind of all mental activity. In the culmination of this process, the emptiness of phenomenal form is realized since they cease to exist in <u>samādhi</u> (concentration, meditation).[86] The negative dialectic (described in this section), which arrives at the conclusion that forms are empty, is an aspect of the practice of cessation (<u>chih</u>). <u>Kuan</u> on the other hand is meditation on the nature of form in its "suchness," and is generally practiced subsequent to cessation.[87] Fa-tsang's texts generally comprise a series of these meditations, both <u>chih</u> and <u>kuan</u>, many of which function to further the realization that all conditioned forms are

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[84] T. 45, p. 638c.

[85] A good discussion of these two components of Buddhist meditation is Geshe Sopa, "Samathavipaśyanāyuganaddha: The Two Leading Principles of Buddhist Meditation," in Kiyota, ed., <u>Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation</u>, pp. 46-67.

[86] T. 45, p. 639b.

[87] T. 45, p. 639c.

empty. Both of these methods, cessation and contemplation, are employed by Fa-tsang as components of the gradual path toward the realization of k'ung.[88]

This initial sense of k'ung in the texts of Fa-tsang may be briefly summarized as follows. When k'ung is predicated of the subject of a sentence, it means that the subject has originated dependent on various conditions and therefore lacks a permanent self-nature (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva). This predication is made through a dialectical criticism of any and all phenomenal forms. No form is found to possess its own independent being. This gradual analytical process, which seeks to expose the non-ultimacy of all phenomena, is directed toward the realization of complete non-attachment and the experience of emptiness. It drives toward a negative freedom, a freedom from attachments and obstructions that have caused a deluded understanding of oneself and one's world, and, consequently, existential suffering.

## The Breakthrough of Emptiness (k'ung)

The second sense of the Chinese character k'ung as found in the texts of Fa-tsang is probably best translated as "emptiness" and in many respects corresponds to the meaning of the Sanskrit śūnyatā in Prajñāpāramitā and Mādhyamika texts. The context and sense of this use of the character k'ung is significantly different

[88]T. 45, p. 639bc.

from the initial sense of k'ung as described above. The initial sense of k'ung was expressed in the context of series of arguments that sought to show the lack of self-nature (tzŭ-hsing) in any particular object of experience. These arguments, formulated in terms of the logical categories of conventional discourse and truth (su-t'i/saṃvṛti), were intended to carry out two related functions. First, the arguments and their concluding predication of k'ung were intended to guide the hearer or reader to a more appropriate understanding of and relation to conditioned existence. To the extent that one could understand that all phenomena are empty, one could live a life of greater freedom from attachment. The second function of the arguments and the predication of k'ung is clearly of preparatory nature. By these analytical means, including the practice of both cessation (chih/śamatha) and contemplation (kuan/vipaśyanā), one prepared for the possibility of the sudden realization of ultimate truth by a disciplined attempt to remain open to experience yet unattached to any aspect or interpretation of it. The second sense of k'ung refers to the dawning of this ultimate realization. The purpose of this section is to interpret and to describe the context within which k'ung as "emptiness" refers to the breakthrough of ultimate truth (chên-t'i/paramārtha-satya).

Although Fa-tsang has a great deal more to say about religious practice (hsing), it is sufficient here to note that practice prepares a basis for the possibility of sudden realization. But

no amount of religious practice guarantees realization (chêng). All religious practices are finite, temporal human acts; they are inherently empty (k'ung).[89] The accumulation of finite acts can never amount to an infinite realization. These practices, however, can gradually engender an unattached mode of being that is open to sudden realization.

The significance of sudden enlightenment (tun-chüeh), as opposed to gradual enlightenment (chien-chüeh), for Fa-tsang and for several other schools of Chinese Buddhist thought, is that enlightenment entails a radical transformation in awareness. A gradual accumulation of wisdom and merit through finite acts achieves only a finite goal, a consciousness that is limited by the acts through which it is constituted. The claim of the "sudden teaching" (tun-chiao) is that enlightenment involves a radical reversal at the center of one's being. All conditioned forms including accumulated merit and practice are exhausted (chin) in the sudden manifestation of ultimate truth (chên-t'i).[90] Absolute nonattachment, a mode of being that becomes manifest in direct realization, is revealed as completely transcending the relative freedom that one feels through various religious acts or practices (hsing). The difference is not simply one of degree.

In the Hua-yen i hai pai-mên, Fa-tsang maintains that sudden enlightenment is not directly dependent on the sequence of

[89] T. 45, p. 632bc.    [90] T. 45, p. 639b.

rational arguments and meditations that precede it.

> Now, while not depending upon a rational investigation, yet one directly perceives the emptiness and naturelessness of all dharmas, there is sudden realization. It is like a mirror manifesting an image. It does not depend upon a sequential order. Responding to conditions, it becomes immediately manifest. This is sudden [enlightenment].[91]

The gradual practice of both meditation (chih/śamatha) and contemplation (kuan/vipaśyanā), however, does initiate a preliminary, relative transformation that enables one to be open to the possibility of a radical transformation. But the event of sudden realization cannot be predicted or controlled; when it does become manifest, it shatters all expectations and familiarities. The transcendent nature of the experience is expressed by Fa-tsang in the identity that he sees between sudden disclosure and the meaning of the symbol chih (cessation). The initial impact of the experience is described as cessation (chih)[92] or destruction (mieh/nirodha),[93] that is, in the experience all forms and structures of one's familiar world cease to exist as such.

Although cessation (chih/śamatha) is a form of meditation through which one prepares for enlightenment (p'u-t'i/bodhi) by attempting to reduce all forms of experience to a quiescent (chi) identity (i),[94] sudden enlightenment (tun-chüeh) itself implies

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[91]T. 45, p. 636ab.

[92]T. 45, p. 639b.

[93]T. 45, p. 634a.

[94]T. 45, p. 639bc.

absolute cessation, the cessation of both form and the meditative negation of form.[95] According to Fa-tsang, cessation (chih) "does not depend on breathing, it does not depend on distinct characteristics or form, it does not depend on emptiness (k'ung). . .all thoughts, together with reflection, are eradicated."[96]

This radical cessation of all conditioned forms within one's awareness and the dawning of nondual (wu-êrh) awareness is symbolized in Fa-tsang's texts by the character k'ung (emptiness). This meaning of the symbol k'ung, the second of Fa-tsang's three senses of that term, is denoted by its location in the syntax of a sentence. K'ung as emptiness occupies a nominal, rather than adjectival, position in the structure of a sentence.

In this sense, emptiness refers to a prereflexive experience in which all form (hsiang) is destroyed (mieh) or exhausted (chin).[97] This event is the sudden manifestation of that which is unconditioned (wu-wei); it is an awareness that is not conditioned by multiple distinctions in the world or even by the basic differentiation of subject and object.[98] It supercedes all relation. When it breaks through into the structures of ordinary consciousness, it overcomes all relative form in an absolute way. It is a nondual (wu-êrh) awareness,[99] empty of all conventional mental activity.

[95] T. 45, p. 639bc.

[96] T. 45, p. 639c.

[97] T. 45, p. 634a.

[98] T. 45, p. 651b.

[99] T. 45, p. 628c.

In the experience of emptiness all difference has been negated. But all difference itself, all distinct form, has also been constituted through negation. All difference is a negation of primal identity, that is, all distinctions arise out of what was before nondistinct, i.e., identity. Emptiness is therefore arrived at dialectically through a double negation, the negation of the negation of identity. It is on this basis that Fa-tsang conceives of emptiness as that to which one returns (kuei). The sudden manifestation of emptiness is symbolized in terms of a "return to the source" (kuei-yüan),[100] a return to that from which one was differentiated. It is a return that moves beyond the "limits of reality" (shih-chi)[101] in that it transcends all distinct forms of knowledge.

It is important to note that, for Fa-tsang, the absolute truth (chên-t'i) that becomes manifest in emptiness is not a metaphysical reality, that is, it is not a transcendent, ideal world existing beyond the present world of experience.[102] Rather it is an unconditioned, pre-reflexive awareness that precedes the structures of conditioned or conventional awareness. Absolute truth (chên-t'i) is an immediate, direct experience of that which grounds (pên) all particular and differentiated experience. Emptiness here refers to that foundation that becomes covered or concealed from direct awareness by a linguistic and

[100] T. 45, p. 669b. [101] T. 45, p. 629a. [102] T. 45, p. 639b.

conceptual structure through which the world is understood. It is the immediate presence of that which precedes and grounds all forms of understanding. Although all language necessarily objectifies that to which it refers, Fa-tsang's texts explicitly maintain that the ultimate truth of "emptiness" is neither objective (so) nor subjective (nêng), but the source (yüan) and ground (pên) of both subject and object.

This ground or foundation (pên) is also referred to as "mind" (hsin).[103] Taking an important concept from Yogācāra sūtras and śāstras, Fa-tsang maintains that any particular phenomenon that comes to consciousness is grounded in Mind itself, or the One Mind (i-hsin), and that the immediate awareness of emptiness is awareness of "Mind only" (wei-hsin).[104] But here again Mind does not refer to subjectivity as opposed to objectivity; it refers to the basic foundation of both subject and object.[105] This foundation is nondual (wu-êrh)[106] and consists of one "flavor" (i-wei)[107] or one essence (i-t'i):[108] that of "emptiness." Since emptiness is empty of all knowable form, the experience is one of unconditional identity (i) and sameness (p'ing-teng).[109]

Fa-tsang associates this meaning of k'ung (emptiness) with the negative meaning of the symbol of nirvāṇa (nieh-p'an) as

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[103] T. 45, p. 640a. [104] T. 45, p. 640a.

[105] T. 45, p. 640a. [106] T. 45, p. 628c.

[107] T. 45, p. 629a. [108] T. 45, p. 635a. [109] T. 45, p. 634b.

cessation or extinction.[110] To experience "emptiness" is to realize a nirvāṇa in which all forms and structures of conventional awareness (su-t'i/saṃvṛti-satya) dissolve into stillness and quiescence (chi).[111] In this experience cessation (chih/śamatha) has been perfected in a thoroughgoing "formless samādhi" (wu-hsiang ting)[112] that calms and eliminates all difference. Fa-tsang claims that whereas in ordinary experience (shêng-ssŭ/saṃsāra) form conceals (yin) emptiness, in this experience, emptiness conceals all form.[113]

Emptiness in this second sense is generally identified with nirvāṇa (nieh-p'an) and, like traditional references to nirvāṇa, the discussion of emptiness is embodied in predominantly negative language. Destruction (mieh), cessation (chih), nonexistence (wu), elimination (wang), exhaustion (chin)--all give negative description to the experience. They maintain that the experience of emptiness is not in continuity with ordinary experience.

The experience of ultimate truth (chên-t'i) fully transcends conventional truth (su-t'i). No aspect of conventional truth is applicable to "emptiness." In "emptiness" there is "no arising, no cessation, no beings as such."[114] Again, as in the case of the first sense of the symbol k'ung, Fa-tsang has drawn heavily on a variety of Indian Mahāyāna texts: Prajñāpāramitā sūtras as well as

[110] T. 45, p. 628a.

[111] T. 45, p. 628a.

[112] T. 45, p. 639b.

[113] T. 45, p. 669bc.

[114] T. 45, p. 628c.

Mādhyamika and Yogācāra śāstras. Through predominantly negative concepts and symbols drawn from both these Indian sources and indigenous Chinese traditions, Fa-tsang maintains the uniqueness and transcendence of the experience of emptiness.[115]

The texts refer to the experience of emptiness as the manifestation (hsien) of an unspeakable (pu-k'e shuo) mystery (hsüan).[116] In the context of the sudden manifestation of emptiness, mystery (hsüan) was an important symbol for all of the Hua-yen masters.[117] Mystery characterized that which they thought to be necessarily mysterious and which remained mysterious even after its manifestation. Since mystery refers to the manifestation of what is unconditioned by subject/object differentiation, it yields no conventional knowledge that rests on the structure of conditioned knowing. The true mystery (hsüan) cannot be expressed in conventional language.[118] The experience is thus not specified in terms of

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[115] Fa-tsang occasionally employs the extreme negation formulated as the "four positions" (catuṣkoti) used by Nāgārjuna and in other Mādhyamika texts, and which is itself modeled upon the Buddhist fourteen inexpressibles (avyakrtavastus). The four positions are that something neither is, nor is not, nor both, nor neither. For a detailed analysis of this type of negation in Indian Buddhist texts see D. Seyfort Ruegg, "The Uses of the Four Positions of the Catuṣkoṭi and the Problem of the Description of Reality in Mahāyāna Buddhism," in Journal of Indian Philosophy, 5 (1977).

[116] T. 45, p. 637a.

[117] In a paper delivered at the 1977 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Kang-Nam Oh shows that the Hua-yen symbol hsü can be traced back to earlier Taoist and Neo-Taoist texts. Kang-Nam Oh, "Taoist Philosophy and Hua-yen Buddhism: A Case of the Sinicization of Buddhism in China."

[118] T. 45, p. 630b.

any particular perspective. By referring to it simply as "suchness" (*chên-ju/tathatā*),[119] the texts seem to imply that no content is conceptually graspable in the experience (i.e., it is such as it is), and also that what becomes manifest is and always was immediately present.

Within this context, *k'ung* as "emptiness" refers indirectly or negatively to the sudden manifestation of ultimate reality (*chên-ju*); "it" is empty of anything knowable or nameable. Ultimate truth (*chên-t'i*) is unfathomable (*p'o-ts'e*).[120] Emptiness here designates the limits of conventional human knowing. All knowledge formulated as such is ultimately inadequate to grasp the truth of "emptiness."[121] The manifestation of ultimate truth (*chên-t'i*) that suddenly breaks through finite human awareness exhausts (*chin*) or negates all forms of knowledge.[122] The concept/symbol emptiness (*k'ung*) anticipates this negation of all form by including the self-negation of its own form in its content. Emptiness negates its own form (*hsiang*) as a concept or symbol, and refers beyond itself and all other forms to the immediate presence of emptiness. The experience of emptiness to which the concept/symbol refers yields no content or knowledge, but is rather a nondual awareness of the immutable (*pu-pien*) ground (*pên*) and source (*yüan*) of all knowable content.

[119] T. 45, p. 634b.

[120] T. 45, p. 632a.

[121] T. 45, p. 636b.

[122] T. 45, p. 640a.

These two symbols, ground (pên) and source (yüan),[123] which are derived from the sudden breakthrough of ultimate truth (chên-t'i) are the basis on which Fa-tsang articulates a further understanding of emptiness, an understanding that goes beyond the negative connotations of the second sense of k'ung to its positive implications. Although in the immediate impact of the sudden manifestation of emptiness one initially focuses on the "wholly other" or completely transcendent nature of the experience, Fa-tsang claims that it is also experienced as that which is fully immanent in any phenomenal form. Sheer transcendence is coupled with the experience of the relation between the unconditioned (wu-wei) and all conditioned (yu-wei) forms (hsiang).[124] Although it is that which is unrelated, not conditioned by any relation, yet it bears a fundamental relationship to all form. But this relationship is not an ordinary relationship; no two entities are involved. The unconditioned (wu-wei/asaṃskṛta) is not an "it," not an entity standing in relation to other entities. It is the nonobjective basis of all form; it is the foundation on which all relations

[123] There are other symbols which seem to also constitute a basis for Fa-tsang's movement toward a positive interpretation of k'ung in that they imply some relation between the manifestation of emptiness and the world of conventional experience. For instance, the One Mind (i-hsin) is clearly the basis for all mental activity.

[124] T. 35, p. 405b.

are based. This paradoxical relationship[125] provides Fa-tsang with a basis to move from the negative meaning of emptiness to its affirmative import.

In this context Fa-tsang moves from cessation (chih/śamatha), in which the absolute formlessness (wu-hsiang) of emptiness becomes manifest, to contemplation (kuan/vipaśyanā) in which one becomes aware of the unconditioned (wu-wei/asaṃskṛta) through the forms and structures of conditioned (yu-wei/saṃskṛta) reality, and aware of the "conditioned" as an expression of the "unconditioned." Although the breakthrough of unconditioned emptiness is initially experienced as the utter cessation (chih) and destruction (mieh) of all familiar forms and structures of conventional experience, this, for Fa-tsang, is more the initial psychological impact of the sudden breakthrough of that experience than it is an adequate account of perfect enlightenment.[126] Nirvāṇa (nieh-p'an) is not simply the overwhelming experience of the "blowing out" or cessation (chih) of the self and the world. True nirvāṇa, according to Fa-tsang, is the realization that enables one to exist fully as a self in the world while simultaneously understanding that there is no self (wu-wo/anātman) and that the world is empty. True nirvāṇa involves the capacity to move from negation (the

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[125]The paradoxical nature of this "relationship" is the topic of discussion in Chapter IV of this dissertation.

[126]T. 45, p. 652a.

experience of the cessation of saṃsāra) to the affirmative power of ultimate truth (chên-t'i/paramārtha satya).

According to Fa-tsang, the negative conception of nirvāṇa as the cessation (chih) of conditioned reality opens up the possibility of two common misconceptions, both of which hinder or prevent the realization of nirvāṇa.[127] First, it can lead to a system of thought that entails an irreconcilable gap between two metaphysical worlds, the realm of conventional experience (shêng-ssŭ/saṃsāra) and the realm of emptiness or nirvāṇa. Fa-tsang insists on the identity between these two, thus opposing a final dualism.[128] Reality (chên-shih/tattva) is nondual (wu-êrh), although there is more than one way to exist within and interpret that reality. In any case Fa-tsang maintains that the metaphysical dualism implied in the conception of nirvāṇa as cessation (chih) is an impediment to realization.

Second, the implications of that conception of nirvāṇa can lead to a nihilistic understanding.[129] Fa-tsang finds nihilistic tendencies present in interpretations of emptiness (tuan-k'ung)[130] within both the Chinese and Indian Buddhist traditions. But

[127]Although this negative conception of nirvāṇa as cessation (chih) derives from an actual experience, the negative force of the sudden breakthrough of emptiness, it remains an inadequate and partial expression of nirvāṇa which for Fa-tsang involves some misleading tendencies.

[128]T. 45, p. 638b. [129]T. 45, p. 638b.

[130]T. 45, p. 656a.

emptiness is not utter nonbeing, as may be implied in the concept of nirvāṇa as "cessation of existence." Enlightenment (p'u-t'i/ bodhi) is not limited to the immediate breakthrough of emptiness, it also involves the power to sustain the deeper implications of that experience within the structures of conditioned, finite life.

In summary, the second sense of k'ung refers to the sudden breakthrough of an awareness in which all the forms and structures of conventional reality have been eliminated (wang) or exhausted (chin). This prereflexive, nondual awareness precedes the opposition between both subject and object, as well as the categories of time and space. In "emptiness" there are neither attachments nor one who is attached. For Fa-tsang, however, this second sense of k'ung is inadequate by itself as a concept and account of enlightenment. It requires completion through its opposite: an affirmative understanding of emptiness that Fa-tsang calls "true emptiness" (chên-k'ung).

## True Emptiness (chên-k'ung)

The third and final sense of the Chinese character k'ung as it is found in the texts of Fa-tsang constitutes his most innovative contribution to the evolving meaning of the Mahāyāna Buddhist concept "emptiness." Although a few Chinese Buddhists had been experimenting with a more affirmative and symbolic understanding of emptiness (k'ung) for more than a century before the time of

Fa-tsang,[131] it was Fa-tsang who articulated the most successful and systematic of these formulations, and who attempted to thoroughly correlate the new understanding of emptiness with all the various elements of the Buddhist tradition. In this task Fa-tsang shows himself to be not only a master of the complexities of traditional Buddhist thought but also an innovative interpreter of that tradition.

In Fa-tsang's texts the discussion of emptiness focuses primarily on this third sense of the term. According to Fa-tsang, this sense is the final and most perfect articulation of that doctrine (yüan-chiao).[132] His emphasis on this sense of emptiness can be interpreted as a corrective against what he considered to be an over-emphasis on the first two senses of k'ung and their predominantly negative connotations.

In any context where Fa-tsang wants to distinguish explicitly this third sense of the character k'ung from the first two senses, or from what he considered misunderstandings of emptiness, then he refers to "true emptiness" (chên-k'ung).[133] "True emptiness"

[131] The most successful of these affirmative formulations of "emptiness" before the time of Fa-tsang was Chih-i's articulation of the "threefold truth." This doctrine, which formed the philosophical basis of the T'ien-T'ai school, was highly influential in China, and was a primary source for understanding the concept of emptiness after Chih-i's time. Fa-tsang enthusiastically picked up Chih-i's line of thought, and attempted a complete reformulation and refinement of that system.

[132] T. 45, p. 629c.

[133] T. 45, p. 652a.

refers not to the transcendence and elimination (min) of all form that is initially experienced in sudden realization (tun-chüeh), but to the identity of form (se) and emptiness (k'ung). "Emptiness not being different from form is called true emptiness."[134] True emptiness (chên-k'ung) is not simply blank consciousness or absolute formlessness, but rather an immediate awareness of the unconditioned ground of all form within conditioned phenomenal forms. The second sense of the character k'ung--emptiness as the transcendence and negation of all conditioned form—is now shown to be only one aspect of or stage within the experience of true emptiness. For Fa-tsang the cessation of conditioned reality is not the final meaning of emptiness. "In order to realize or enter the level of the Buddha (fo-ti/Buddha-bhūmi), one cannot forever remain in quiescence or extinction."[135]

In the experience of emptiness, what one is initially aware of is just this quiescence (chi) or extinction (mieh). It is experienced as the extinction of all familiar, conditioned forms of consciousness. Doctrinally formulated, this assertion implies that emptiness completely transcends, or is separate from, the world of ordinary awareness. Emptiness is not a phenomenal form, it is not an objective reality, it is not even a new perspective,

[134] T. 33, p. 553b. This translation is from Cook, "Fa-tsang's Brief Commentary on the Heart Sutra," p. 191.

[135] T. 45, p. 636b.

or point of view. However, according to Fa-tsang, the mature bodhisattva passes through this initial shock in the experience of emptiness to an awareness of the Unconditioned (wu-wei) fully immanent in conditioned reality (yu-wei) as its ground or foundation (pên) and as its source (yüan). He passes from the overpowering experience in which emptiness exhausts (chin) and destroys (huai/p'o) all conditioned forms of consciousness to the realization that "form is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from form."[136] True emptiness (chên-k'ung) is the awareness of the unconditioned emptiness through the forms of conditioned awareness, and the awareness of conditioned, phenomenal forms as grounded in and expressive of unconditional emptiness.

In the experience of true emptiness, phenomenal forms become transparent to the ultimate truth of emptiness, and in the same process phenomenal forms are themselves clarified or illuminated by emptiness (i i k'ung ming shin).[137] Fa-tsang expresses the form/emptiness identity in the following manner:

> When the bodhisattva contemplates form, there are none that are not the perception of emptiness; contemplating emptiness, there is nothing that is not the perception of form. Without limit, without obstruction, it constitutes a dharma of one essence.[138]

The conventional world of form is therefore not a realm existing apart from the realm of emptiness.[139] Yet despite their full

[136] T. 33, p. 553a.

[137] T. 45, p. 629a.

[138] T. 45, p. 652c.

[139] T. 45, p. 651a.

identity, form and emptiness are also different. Emptiness does not exist as one particular form, it fully transcends form. True emptiness, then, includes both the experience of identity and the experience of difference. True emptiness is the paradoxical awareness that form and emptiness are completely identical and yet fully distinct.[140]

Fa-tsang clarifies this relationship by employing the analogous relation between pên and mo (root/foundation and branch/derivative). Emptiness is the foundation, the ground (pên), on which form, the derivative (mo), is established.[141] Form, the derivative (mo), depends on (i) its foundation in emptiness for its conditioned existence.[142] Emptiness is that on which anything depends (so-i);[143] it is not itself dependent or conditioned (wu-wei/asamskrita). Form is that which is dependent (neng-i);[144] it has no own-being (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva). Form and emptiness are identical in that all form is grounded in emptiness.[145] There is no form that does not express emptiness since all forms are empty. Yet, form and emptiness are different in that emptiness is not itself a form.[146] In this respect emptiness completely transcends form.

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[140] T. 45, p. 653c.

[141] T. 45, p. 635b.

[142] T. 45, p. 652c.

[143] T. 45, p. 635b.

[144] T. 45, p. 652c.

[145] T. 45, p. 652c.

[146] T. 45, p. 653c.

In addition, form and emptiness both reveal (hsien) and conceal (yin) each other.[147] Form conceals emptiness from most human awareness. Due to human preoccupation with the various forms and structures of conditioned reality, the emptiness within which, and on the basis of which, forms have their existence is only rarely brought to human awareness. Even many of those who set out on the Buddhist path seek emptiness as if it were a particular form, an entity. This reification of the religious goal constitutes a significant source of attachment and delusion.[148] However, all form participates in emptiness. All forms are empty and, because of that, can become transparent to their immediate foundation in emptiness. In this way any form is said to be potentially capable of revealing (hsien) emptiness.[149]

Conversely, emptiness conceals and illuminates form. Form is concealed[150] when emptiness initially breaks into consciousness as the extinction (min) and destruction (mieh) of all form. This experience of nonabiding (pu-chu) formlessness (wu-hsiang) eradicates the solidified existence of forms. However, true emptiness also illuminates (ming)[151] forms; it manifests (hsien) their true, original nature (pên-hsing). In this respect form is revealed to be the conditioned existence (yu) of unconditioned emptiness.

[147]T. 45, p. 639c.

[148]T. 33, p. 553a.

[149]T. 45, p. 653b.

[150]T. 45, p. 669bc.

[151]T. 45, p. 629a.

This twofold relation between form and emptiness is expressed in another similar manner. Fa-tsang claims that emptiness both establishes (ch'êng) and destroys (huai) form.[152] All form derives from emptiness and participates in the ground of emptiness. Yet emptiness is the destruction (huai) or elimination (min) of form in that all form participates in emptiness in a finite, conditioned way. That is, emptiness, as the foundation of form, transcends empty form infinitely. For Fa-tsang, the relationship between form and emptiness is expressed in terms of both identity and difference, immanence and transcendence.[153]

Fa-tsang illustrates the movement from emptiness as quiescence (chi) and extinction (mieh) of form back to a renewed vision of form by employing the relation between the two traditional types of Buddhist meditation. Cessation (chih/śamatha) is meditation that seeks to sublate all distinct forms of awareness to arrive at nondual (wu-êrh), formless samādhi (wu-hsiang ting).[154] For Fa-tsang, the perfection of cessation is the sudden breakthrough of unconditioned emptiness that exhausts all forms of conditioned awareness. All thought and mental activity are eradicated in the calm and stillness of pure emptiness.[155]

But true emptiness entails the further realization of emptiness manifest within form. In this experience emptiness

[152] T. 45, p. 653c.

[153] T. 45, p. 653c.

[154] T. 45, p. 639b.

[155] T. 45, p. 639b.

is apprehended through form, and form is revealed as grounded in emptiness. For Fa-tsang contemplation (kuan/vipaśyanā) is essentially meditation on and realization of the form/emptiness relation and its further implications.[156] Many sections of Fa-tsang's texts consist of contemplations (kuan) arising out of the experience of true emptiness. In contemplation, then, one is free to deal with the various forms and structures of conditioned reality (yu-wei). This statement, however, is not a simple reassertion of a naive and binding relation to the world. Contemplation is meditation on form and emptiness, or empty form. It is meditation that has passed through and includes the negation of all conditioned reality by unconditioned emptiness. Fa-tsang's contemplations are attempts to apply realization (chêng) to finite life in such a way that one remains fully aware of and open to one's foundation in unconditioned emptiness.

Whereas cessation (chih) is the immediate quieting of all thought, contemplation (kuan) is the revival and liberation of thought.[157] In the realization of true emptiness, the intellect is not forfeited; it is fully operative through the realization of its own true nature (hsing). True emptiness is therefore not the absence of thinking,[158] but rather the presence of a thinking that is free of attachment to all empty forms of thought.

[156] T. 45, p. 640a. [157] T. 45, p. 654b.

[158] T. 45, p. 629a.

Contemplation (kuan/vipaśyanā) is thinking that takes the realization of emptiness as its origin and point of departure.

Fa-tsang's texts do not treat cessation (chih) and contemplation (kuan) (or emptiness and true emptiness) as contradictory or irreconcilable.[159] In fact, they are simply two aspects of or moments within the full realization of true reality (chên-shih/tattva). Fa-tsang expresses the harmonious relationship between the two in a short contemplation on the nature of cessation (chih) and contemplation (kuan) in his Hua-yen-i-hai pai-mên as follows:

> First, the clarification of cessation and contemplation. [Cessation] is like perceiving that objects have no substance. The sphere of emptiness and quiescence is cessation. As to the mind which illuminates essence [i.e., emptiness], this is contemplation. Now since the uncaused contemplation of mind penetrates the natureless cessation of substance, the sphere of mind is non-dual. This is the harmonious penetration of cessation and contemplation. Because cessation is without substance, it does not obstruct the mind. In this way this sphere is in accordance with wisdom and allows movement. Since the contemplation of mind does not obstruct the sphere of cessation, for this reason, wisdom, being in accord with dharma, is quiescent and calm.[160]

Neither cessation nor contemplation contradicts the other. Contemplation arises in the midst of cessation. Again, in another text, Fa-tsang reflects on the unity of cessation and contemplation.

> The two entrances of cessation (chih) and contemplation (kuan) jointly complete and assist each other. If one does not cultivate both

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[159] T. 45, p. 639c. [160] T. 45, p. 632a.

> cessation and contemplation then there is no means to obtain entrance to the path of bodhi. The Hua-yen [sūtra] says: For example, it is like a golden winged bird who, by means of the left and the right wing, raises himself above the ocean's water. . . When the Tathāgata appears in the world, it is also just like this. Taking the great cessation and marvelous contemplation, they are made to be a pair of wings.[161]

Expressed in imagery drawn from the Avataṃsaka sūtra (Hua-yen ching), Fa-tsang joins cessation and contemplation into a paradoxical unity. True emptiness is the realization in which no conflict emerges between these two apparent opposites.[162]

For Fa-tsang, the identity between form and emptiness that emerges from the experience of true emptiness is one of the bases on which the experience of emptiness can be reconciled with the bodhisattva's compassion (pei/Karuṇā).[163] The classical formulation of the tension between wisdom (i.e., awareness of emptiness) and compassion was given in the Diamond Sūtra. There it is asserted that the bodhisattva must generate enough compassion to guide countless suffering beings to nirvāṇa, while simultaneously embodying wisdom enough to understand that there are no beings at all.[164] That is, the experience of emptiness is the experience in which no form, including the forms of living beings, ultimately exists. Yet in spite of this awareness of emptiness, which is wisdom, the bodhisattva maintains compassion for all living beings.

[161] T. 45, p. 639c. [162] T. 45, p. 654b. [163] T. 45, p. 638b.

[164] Conze, Buddhist Wisdom Books, p. 25.

According to Fa-tsang, emptiness and compassion are only artificially distinct.[165] They are united in the realization of true emptiness. Their difference can be formulated as follows: Emptiness is the immediate awareness of unconditioned reality (wu-wei) that is mediated through and that grounds conditioned forms (yu-wei); compassion is the expression of one's true relation to conditioned forms as seen through the ultimate truth of emptiness. Fa-tsang links wisdom and compassion with emptiness and form to explain the relation between them.

> Contemplating the identity of form with emptiness completes supreme wisdom (ta-chih), that being the case, one does not dwell in saṃsāra. Contemplating the identity of emptiness with form completes supreme compassion (ta pei/Mahā karuṇā), that being the case, one does not dwell in Nirvāṇa.[166]

Wisdom (emptiness) and compassion are taken up into the realization of true emptiness (chên-k'ung) in such a way that their fundamental identity emerges: Wisdom is the awareness of the emptiness of all forms; compassion is the awareness that all forms or beings, including oneself, participate in and are expressive of the unconditioned ground of all form, emptiness. To fully understand and embody this identity is to realize ultimate truth (chên-t'i/paramārtha satya). "If form and emptiness are nondual, and compassion and wisdom are not different, then this constitutes true reality" (chên-shih/tattva).[167] This union of form and

[165]T. 45, p. 638b. [166]T. 45, p. 638b. [167]T. 45, p. 638b.

emptiness, wisdom and compassion, is the nature of "true emptiness."

The movement from emptiness, or wisdom, to compassion was symbolically portrayed in the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras. These texts described the bodhisattva's arrival at the "reality limit" (bhūta-koṭi) and his subsequent decision not to enter the absolute cessation of nirvāṇa, but to return instead to the world of birth and death (saṃsāra) in order to lead all sentient beings to nirvāṇa.[168] This symbolic account is clearly Fa-tsang's model for the distinction between emptiness (k'ung) and true emptiness (chên-k'ung). Nirvāṇa, interpreted in terms of extinction and cessation, is not true nirvāṇa. True nirvāṇa, which corresponds to true emptiness, involves the passage through negation to a reaffirmation of conditioned existence.[169] But this reaffirmation is not a return to deluded, conventional awareness. Alienation has been overcome through the immediate manifestation (tun-hsien) of unconditional truth (chên-t'i/paramārtha).

A reaffirmation, however, stands in danger of losing its distinctiveness from the original affirmation, which in this case was the source of deluded consciousness and its resultant suffering. For Fa-tsang and other Mahāyāna Buddhists, both

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[168]Edward Conze, trans., The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines (Bolinas, CA: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973), p. 259.

[169]T. 45, p. 638b.

Indian and Chinese, this distinction is maintained through the appropriation of skillful means (fang-pien/upāya).[170] "Skill in means" (fang-pien/upāya) can be interpreted as the capacity to maintain awareness of unconditioned emptiness while living and working in conditioned, relative reality. In a reference to what he calls a "well-skilled mind," Fa-tsang says, "This means that while one contemplates true principles [i.e., the ultimate truth of emptiness] it does not interfere with the various affairs and one skillfully cultivates the ten thousand activities."[171] Through skill in means, the bodhisattva deals with the differentiated forms of conditioned existence without the alienation that usually accompanies that mode of existence. Complete identity (chi) in emptiness is maintained, along with conventional separation or differentiation (pu-chi). Fa-tsang claims that in true emptiness the union of identity and difference is established without obstruction (wu-ai) between them.[172]

Skill in means, then, is the principle that guides the application of this realization to concrete situations in the life of a bodhisattva.[173] Through skill in means any speech at all is the speaking of the dharma. It is the capacity to speak in any situation in such a way that the truth of emptiness may be heard, and in such a way that one's own contact with ultimate truth

[170] T. 45, p. 638a.

[171] T. 45, p. 651a.

[172] T. 45, p. 635ab.

[173] T. 45, p. 638a.

(chên-t'i) is maintained rather than violated. Skill in means is the capacity to adjust and apply the universal truth of emptiness to the concrete situation of the hearer without destroying its universality or truthfulness. In this way the bodhisattva includes the perspective of the hearer in his speaking so that speech effectively works to break down the confines of that perspective, and to open up the possibility for the sudden manifestation of emptiness. Skill in means for Fa-tsang, then, is the working principle that corresponds to the realization of true emptiness. It affects the paradoxical unity between emptiness and form, between wisdom and compassion, between cessation and contemplation, between nirvāṇa and saṃsāra in the life of the bodhisattva.

By establishing these identities and proclaiming the artificiality of any final separation in these apparent oppositions such as form/emptiness, compassion/wisdom, and the like, Fa-tsang has formulated a doctrine of emptiness that bears a profoundly affirmative significance.[174] Ultimate truth (chên-t'i/paramārtha) is not simply utterly transcendent to conventional experience, it is immediately present, both in oneself (ju-lai tsang/tathāgatagarbha) and in the forms of one's world. Truth is present

[174]Fa-tsang contrasts his "affirmative" approach to the "negative" approach of Nāgārjuna and the Mādhyamika school. He does not reject the latter since he employs it as well, but considers them to be "merely two sides of the same coin." T. 45, p. 502c. See also Cook, Hua-yen Buddhism, pp. 47-50.

as the very essence of conditioned form. There is no absolutely transcendent world to which one must progress through a complete negation of form. Realization can dawn suddenly rather than through a gradual accumulation of wisdom because what is to be realized is the essence of what is immediately at hand.

Phenomenal forms are a "mere dream, fantasy, and illusion" as declared in the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras;[175] but equally important for Fa-tsang is the fact that, when seen as they truly are (ju-shih/yathābhūtam) empty phenomenal forms are concrete expressions of the unconditional truth of emptiness.[176] Emptiness is both the negation (min) and the affirmation (ch'êng) of form.[177] Emptiness may become manifest through the negation of form.[178] In this situation form is the medium through which unconditioned truth becomes present; form has become transparent to its ground in emptiness. Here the negation of form is its affirmation. The basis or root (pên) of finite, conditioned form is revealed to be unconditional and infinite. The emptiness of form is simultaneously its fullness.

One of Fa-tsang's several models for the relationship between form and emptiness is the relation between the mirror and its various reflected forms.[179] The mirror itself represents emptiness.

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[175] Conze, The Perfection of Wisdom, pp. 90-98.

[176] T. 45, p. 637c. [177] T. 45, p. 627c. [178] T. 45, p. 653b.

[179] Other models include the relation between unchanging substance (gold) and its changing forms (a statue of a lion, a

The images reflected in the mirror are the conditioned forms of phenomenal reality. The forms reflected in the mirror are transitory and insubstantial, they come into existence, change, and pass out of existence. They are clearly conditioned and have no autonomous self-nature (wu-tzŭ-hsing). The mirror itself (emptiness) is unchanging. No matter what forms are reflected in it, the mirror itself is unchanged in its capacity to reflect form. Although the mirror itself is formless, it reflects all form clearly and without distortion. All form is founded on or grounded in the mirror (emptiness). It is possible to look at the mirror and see only the various forms reflected in it. In this case the finite and transitory nature of form leads to confusion and misunderstanding. One does not perceive the unchanging basis of form since the mirror itself is not simply one form among others. However, since the forms are in essence only the reflections in the mirror (emptiness), it is also possible that any one form can lead beyond itself to the foundation of all form. If this occurs, one becomes aware of the fact that one is seeing the forms in the mirror and the mirror in the forms. Form is emptiness and emptiness is form.

The validation of concrete phenomenal reality that is achieved through this interpretation of the doctrine of emptiness is for Fa-tsang an important corrective of negative and dualistic

ring, etc.), and the relationship between the one ocean and its numerous tributaries which are sustained by the ocean but which also negate themselves in their journey back to the ocean.

tendencies within the Buddhist tradition. Concrete phenomena are not simply denied or negated in search of a realm beyond this one. Conditional reality is affirmed in its identity with unconditioned emptiness, and as the medium for the manifestation of ultimate truth.

The awareness that concrete phenomena are potentially symbolic of the ultimate truth of emptiness obviates the necessity to limit the Buddhist dharma to doctrines and practices of negative character alone. Fa-tsang's understanding of emptiness can be seen as a synthesis of the means of negation as articulated in the Prajñāpāramitā/Mādhyamika tradition, and the means of affirmation as articulated in the tathāgatagarbha tradition (ju-lai tsang). Although Fa-tsang's preference for the latter is clearly demonstrated in his p'an-chiao (classification of teachings) system, this most probably stands as a corrective of what for Fa-tsang had become an overemphasis in Mahāyāna thought. Be that as it may, any of Fa-tsang's texts exemplify the fact that the foundations of his system of thought lie in both of these traditions.

The text that constitutes the core of Fa-tsang's Hua-yen lineage is the Avataṃsaka sūtra (Hua-yen ching).[180] The Hua-yen sūtra, which combines Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, and tathāgatagarbha inclinations, presents a highly symbolic interpretation of

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[180] There are three Chinese translations of the Avataṃsaka sūtra: T. 9, pp. 395-788; T. 10, pp. 1-444; T. 10, pp. 661-851.

emptiness in its affirmative mode (i.e., Fa-tsang's "true emptiness"). The largest section of the Avataṃsaka sūtra corpus, the Gaṇḍavyūha, presents its teachings in the form of an elaborate and imaginative myth. The myth concerns the spiritual quest of a young man, Sudhana, who travels from teacher to teacher in search of enlightenment. Progressing through various stages of realization,[181] Sudhana finally realizes full and perfect enlightenment. The sūtra describes, in extravagant and colorful imagery, the nature of his enlightenment experience.[182]

What Fa-tsang means by true emptiness in which the identity of emptiness and form is effected is illustrated in the myth by the fact that every phenomenon Sudhana saw was experienced as sparkling, radiant, constantly transforming and interpenetrating with all other phenomena. Each conditional phenomenon was the bearer of unconditional significance. Emptiness was perceived to be fully present in all forms of experience. Each phenomenon was completely transparent to its unconditional foundation, yet simultaneously present as one particular conditioned form. Fa-tsang's accomplishment is to have rendered a systematic interpretation of

[181] The Daśabhūmika sūtra (Sūtra on the Ten Stages) constitutes one section of the Avataṃsaka corpus. It may have been one of the primary influences in the composition of late sections of the sūtra corpus.

[182] A good account of the imagery and teachings of the Gaṇḍavyūha is given in D.T. Suzuki, Essays in Zen Buddhism (Third Series) (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1953).

the meaning of the myth of Sudhana as presented in the Hua-yen sūtra. Fa-tsang's understanding of true emptiness, an understanding that emphasizes the positive implications inherent in the relation between form and emptiness, is the central element in that interpretation.

These three senses of the character k'ung in the texts of Fa-tsang are generally not isolated and defined separately as they have been in this study. They are sequentially interrelated in a unified and coherent manner so that they function as stages in the realization of "emptiness." Appropriation of the final stage in this progressive movement, that is, "true emptiness," overcomes human suffering and alienation.[183] This is not accomplished, however, by the complete obliteration of all differentiated existence. In the realization of true emptiness, polarities, oppositions, and differences are preserved while they are simultaneously transcended in an ultimate unity.[184] Subject and object are not dissolved, but mysteriously (hsüan) lifted up into a union that transcends their obstructions and conflicts (wu-ai).

Although the three senses of k'ung as described in this interpretation are distinct in terms of their sense, in the final analysis, they share a common referent: They all finally refer to a possible mode of being in the world. This mode of being has been characterized first of all as an attitude of nonattachment. The

[183]T. 45, p. 639a.

[184]T. 45, p. 638ab.

bodhisattva has realized the impermanent, empty nature of all sources of attachment. He holds on to nothing, realizing that reality is not graspable. By means of "nonclinging" (pu-ch'u),[185] the bodhisattva enters into a mode of being that is characterized by openness; he is open and attentive to whatever makes its appearance in the temporal flow of existence. And that which does appear in impermanent, conditioned form is revealed to be expressive of the unconditioned source and ground of all form—emptiness. Furthermore, the realization of true emptiness enables a mode of being characterized by compassion. The fulfilled bodhisattva is in immediate contact with the fundamental interrelation of all being so that he knows the emptiness of the division between "self" and "other than self."

The reference to this mode of being in the world is made in Fa-tsang's texts in several ways. The reference is made descriptively, as above, by portraying the life of the bodhisattva and his enlightened existence. The texts also seek to evoke the reference dialectically by hoping to bridge the gap between conventional truth and the negation of that truth. And, finally, the texts seek to elicit the new mode of being through the efficacy of religious symbols and paradoxical formulations of religious truth.

[185] T. 45, p. 628b.

# III

# FURTHER DIMENSIONS OF EMPTINESS

The understanding of emptiness as described above is not an isolated topic of concern in the texts of Fa-tsang. Indeed, it is ever present in any context of discussion as the most fundamental and essential element. Even where the discussion does not explicitly deal with k'ung at all, the meaning and implications of emptiness are present and presupposed.

One purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how the concept of emptiness is situated within the larger context of Fa-tsang's thought. For this purpose, three different aspects of Fa-tsang's thought will be described, all of which function to develop, extend, and clarify the meaning of emptiness as discussed in the previous chapter. The first of these three aspects is Fa-tsang's discussion of li (principle) and shih (phenomenon) where li is employed in the place of k'ung. Second, it will be demonstrated how Fa-tsang develops the cosmological implications of emptiness, thus significantly extending the domain of that concept. Third, the place of emptiness within the most fundamental structure of Fa-tsang's thought can be clarified by a discussion of the dialectic of the One Mind.

A further objective of this chapter is to lay the foundation for the discussion of paradox in the thought of Fa-tsang in

Chapter IV by introducing several doctrinal elements that, together with emptiness, will be significant for that discussion.

## Li (Principle) and Shih (Phenomena)

The characters li and shih are two of the most common and important in Fa-tsang's texts. Fa-tsang employs them to clarify and to expand on the relationship between form (se) and emptiness (k'ung) within the context of "true emptiness" (chên-k'ung). It is significant that li and shih are not Chinese translations of Sanskrit Buddhist terms; both are concepts that, by Fa-tsang's time, had a long and complex history of meaning in the indigenous Chinese philosophical setting. By drawing these two ideas into the discussion of emptiness, Fa-tsang has been able to add to the discussion various connotations of meaning that were not otherwise available in the terms translated from their Sanskrit originals. That is, Fa-tsang's use of the characters li and shih allows him to make a more creative contribution to the discussion of emptiness than would have been possible in terms of the characters conventionally employed to translate original Sanskrit terms.

Since the character li in this particular discussion is the more important (in view of its identity with emptiness), and since it has had a long history of ambiguity, the most important aspects in the history of its meaning are summarized here briefly.[1]

[1]This brief description of the history of the character li

The character li appears in several of the important pre-Han texts, for example, in the Book of Changes (I-Ching), the Mo-tzŭ, the Chuang-tzŭ, and the Mencius (Meng-tzŭ). In these early contexts, the most important meaning of li was the verbal sense of "to put in order." In the nominal position it often meant order or pattern. In a few contexts li had the meaning of a principle by means of which affairs or things were governed. Li as a moral principle of the cosmos was one form of this usage.[2]

The first truly systematic development of li was achieved in post-Han Neo-Taoist (hsüan-hsüeh) texts. Both Wang Pi (A.D. 226-249) and Kuo Hsiang (d. A.D. 312) employed li as a central concept in their systems of thought. However, their interpretations of li differed significantly, and these differences characterize, from their time on, two basic ways in which li is interpreted in the history of Chinese thought. Kuo-hsiang understood the Tao in terms of the principles (li) through which it operates. According to Kuo Hsiang, there are various ideal principles operating in the cosmos which give the cosmos its nature. Each principle (li) is differentiated from others and is self-sufficient. In

relies heavily on two previous studies of that concept: W.T. Chan, "The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept Li as Principle," Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies, 1964, pp. 123-48, and Paul Demieville, "La pénétration du bouddhisme dans la tradition philosophique chinoise," Cahiers d'histoire mondiale 3, 1956, 28-31.

[2]Chan, "The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept Li as Principle," pp. 123-28.

terms of this interpretation, all phenomena (shih) are governed or regulated in their existence by numerous universal principles (li) that are discrete and distinguishable according to the activities or categories of phenomena that they govern.

For Wang Pi, however, li was the one universal absolute. In his commentary on the Lao-tzu, li is equated with the Tao yet it becomes an even more important idea. Li is the "ultimate principle" (chih-li), the unifying principle of all existence.[3] Li transcends phenomena yet is that "principle by which things are" (so-i-jan chih li).[4] Wang Pi seems to give very little specific conceptual content to li. Rather li symbolizes the transcendent unity that governs and sustains all particular phenomena. It is this understanding of li that becomes highly significant in the Chinese Buddhist tradition.

The first Chinese Buddhist philosopher to employ li consistently was Chih-tun, who was highly influenced by the writings of the Neo-Taoists and especially by Wang Pi. Accordingly, Chih-tun identified li with various symbols for the absolute drawn from the early Chinese Buddhist tradition, such as "original nonbeing" (pên wu), "wisdom" (pan-jo/prajñā), and "suchness" (chên-ju/tathatā). The tendency for li to be symbolic of ultimate reality became even more pronounced and established after the time of Chih-tun. In later writings, li was identified with the

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[3]Ibid., p. 130. [4]Ibid.

_dharmakāya_ (_fa-shên_) and nirvāṇa (_nieh-p'an_) and gradually came to symbolize all positive aspects of the Absolute "beyond all words and names" (_li_ _yen_ _ming_).

Along with this symbolic capacity, the identity of _li_ with absolute reality, _li_ also continued to be employed in its more conceptual meaning as "principle." It was possible for the same text to refer to various princples (_li_) of conventional logic or thought while at the same time employing _li_ in its symbolic capacity as a symbol of ultimate truth. This multivalence or ambiguity in the history of the character _li_ provided an ideal vehicle for Fa-tsang's expression of true emptiness (_chên-k'ung_).

For Fa-tsang the character _li_ has a twofold significance corresponding to the two predominant trends in the earlier history of _li_ described above. First, _li_ is a conceptual principle that applies universally to all phenomena. _Li_ is the principle that all phenomena are empty (_k'ung/śūnya_) of self-nature (_tzŭ-hsing_).[5] Second, _li_ is an affirmative symbol for ultimate truth. But for Fa-tsang these two meanings of _li_ are not arbitrarily isolated from each other. In fact, it is precisely the conceptual content of _li_ as principle that is symbolic of ultimate truth. These two functions of _li_ and their relationship will be explored in the following discussion in terms of a common set of terms in Fa-tsang's texts, _li_ and _shih_.

[5]T. 45, p. 653bc.

Li, in its first sense, is the principle that asserts that all phenomena are dependently cooriginated (yüan-ch'i/pratītya-samutpāda). Shih are phenomena that are constituted and governed by principle, li. It is important to note here that li does not refer to a multiplicity of principles. There is only one principle—that all phenomena are dependently originated or empty--although this principle is often expressed in different ways. For instance, nominal clauses such as the principle of no-self (wu-wo li),[6] or the principle of no nature (wu-hsing chih li)[7] seem to imply that the structure of reality consists of a number of discrete principles (li). However, upon closer examination, all these instances prove to be simply variant expressions of the one principle: They all assert the principle of emptiness.

Nevertheless, because li became the central concept in Neo-Confucian thought (li-hsüeh), which came to prominence after the decline of Buddhism in China and which has been influential in Chinese thought up through the modern era, there has been a persistent tendency to interpret the Buddhist meaning of li in terms of the Neo-Confucian meaning. This line of thought is not entirely inappropriate since a clear line of influence can be traced from the Hua-yen interpretation to the Neo-Confucian reinterpretation of li. However, serious misunderstanding occurs if the two

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[6]T. 45, p. 653c.

[7]T. 35, p. 405b.

interpretations of li are considered to be identical.[8] According to Fa-tsang, there is not a plurality of principles operant in the cosmos, as is claimed in Neo-Confucian thought. Li is a complex but unified principle that asserts the dependency and interrelatedness of all phenomena.

The concept li (principle), like the concept k'ung, has been defined by Fa-tsang in terms of the doctrine of dependent origination. Li and k'ung are both expressions which are based on the meaning of this fundamental Buddhist doctrine.

But unlike the term emptiness (k'ung) which had tended to stress the negative implications of relatedness, the character li was employed in such a way that the affirmative significance of dependent origination (yüan-ch'i/pratītyasamutpāda) was also brought out into view. In Fa-tsang's writings, meditations on li and shih focus on the various aspects of the relation between the two.[9] Li as dependent origination is the principle through which all conditioned phenomena (shih) are constituted and related. It is the

[8]In his book on Hua-yen thought, Garma C.C. Chang has tended to define li in terms of its later Neo-Confucian meaning. In Neo-Confucian thought, li are the universal principles or ideas that underlie and serve as the ideal pattern for all actual phenomena. But in Hua-yen thought li is the singular principle of dependent origination or emptiness which, further, is symbolic of ultimate truth. Li, like emptiness and suchness, is nondual. There is no sense of a plurality of principles governing various aspects of reality. Chang, The Buddhist Teaching of Totality, pp. 142-43.

[9]T. 45, p. 630b.

rule that governs the processes involved in finite, conditioned, dynamic reality, and that governs the constant origination, sustenance, and cessation of all conditioned forms. The principle (li) of dependent origination thus points out both the positive and the negative dimensions in finite reality. Li is affirmative of conditioned phenomena in that all phenomena are created, constituted, and sustained by the principle of relatedness as it is actualized in phenomena.[10] The principle of dependent origination has a positive dimension in that it affirms the existence of any phenomenon by pointing to the process through which the phenomenon comes into being and is sustained.

But the principle of dependent origination also powerfully expresses a negative dimension, and in this respect li is identical with the connotations of k'ung. Li as dependent origination declares the voidness or nonexistence of all phenomena.[11] That a phenomenon originates dependently means that it does not possess its own being (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva). Phenomena do not control their own power of origination or existence. In view of this principle, all things and events seem to lack substantiality and aseity. Dependent origination implies the inability of any phenomenon to depend on itself for its existence. The implication of this negative dimension is that all phenomena are contingent, conditioned, and finite, or, in a word, empty.

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[10]T. 45, p. 653c. [11]T. 45, p. 653b.

It follows from this that the principle of dependent origination is, for Fa-tsang, simultaneously positive and negative. It negates any claims to ultimacy on the part of any phenomena, thing, person, event, or idea. On the other hand, it affirms their status as conditioned elements of finite reality. Phenomena exist, but existence is finite. According to Fa-tsang it is important to realize that this principle of emptiness does not imply an absolute denial of phenomena or our finite knowledge of phenomena.[12] His meditations on li and shih serve to point this out and, in the process, to clarify the meaning of true emptiness (chên-k'ung).[13]

Another aspect of the relation between li and shih is that there is no obstruction (wu-ai) between them despite the fact that they can appear to oppose each other.[14] Emptiness and form had often been interpreted to be antithetical to each other in the early Chinese Buddhist tradition. Either one dwelt "on this shore" (tz'ŭ-an) and experienced the world of form and saṃsāra, or one dwelt "on the other shore" (pi-an) in the world of emptiness and nirvāṇa. As Robert Gimello has pointed out, the characters li and shih seem to be less susceptible to this kind of dualistic interpretation than are k'ung (emptiness) and se (form).[15] It is relatively clear in the case of li and shih that the principle of relation (dependent origination) is not a reality transcendent

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[12] T. 45, p. 654c. [13] T. 45, p. 630b. [14] T. 45, p. 653c.

[15] Robert Gimello, Chih-yen and the Foundations of Hua-yen Buddhism, pp. 485-86.

to the forms that are related. Therefore, Fa-tsang claims that one aspect of the relation between li and shih is that they do not conflict and oppose each other; that is, there is no obstruction (wu-ai) between them.[16]

This relation is further explicated by the categories of pervasion (pien)[17] and mutual entering (hsiang-ju).[18] Li as the principle of dependent origination is said to pervade (pien) all phenomena in that no phenomenon exists that did not originate dependently.[19] This principle is present and actualized in all elements of existence. Li and shih are said to interpenetrate or enter each other (hsiang-ju) in the same way.[20] Principle enters all phenomena to the extent that they have originated and exist. The identity of any phenomenon is thus established only through its relations with other phenomena which are governed by li. All phenomena enter into li to the extent that they participate in the process of dependent origination.

Another category of relation that emerges from Fa-tsang's meditations on li and shih is that they both "conceal" (yin) and "reveal" (hsien) each other.[21] Phenomena are said to conceal principle in that phenomena themselves attract attention away from the principle on which the phenomena are founded. As stated earlier, this concealment is the basic cause of suffering in

[16] T. 45, p. 653c. [17] T. 45, p. 654a. [18] T. 45, p. 654a.
[19] T. 44, p. 253a. [20] T. 45, p. 654a. [21] T. 45, p. 653bc.

saṃsāra. Attachment to phenomenal forms prevents us from seeing their true reality (chên-shih). But phenomena are also inherently capable of revealing principle (hsien-li).[22] The principle of dependent origination exists only in the phenomena that are governed by it. Therefore, li is known to us only through phenomena that originate dependently; shih reveals (hsien) li.

In addition, principle conceals phenomena because the principle of dependent origination leads to the awareness of the emptiness of phenomena.[23] All phenomena are initially exhausted (chin) in the manifestation of emptiness. However, li also can be said to reveal shih[24] in that he who perceives all phenomena as dependently originated perceives those phenomena in their true nature or "as they truly are" (ju-shih/yathābhūtam). Li reveals the ultimate nature of phenomena, which is concealed by phenomena themselves.

Finally, Fa-tsang describes the relation between li and shih in terms of their identity (chi) and nonidentity (pu-chi) or difference (i).[25] Li as dependent origination is the principle of relation for all phenomena. Its concrete actuality obtains only in and through the particular phenomenon whose existence is established and sustained by it. Li therefore is not an abstraction existing apart from actual reality, but is inseparable from that which is related.[26] This is the basis on which the identity of li

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[22]T. 45, p. 653b. [23]T. 45, p. 653b. [24]T. 45, p. 629a.

[25]T. 45, p. 653a. [26]T. 45, p. 668c.

and *shih* is asserted. *Li* exists only in phenomena and nowhere else. But despite this identity there is clearly a difference between the principle of dependent origination and those particular phenomena that originate dependently. This difference has been described as a category or a modal difference.[27]

Thus, principle and phenomena are related in terms of both identity and difference.[28] This particular mode of relation brings us back to the relation between form and emptiness, as discussed in the context of true emptiness. Drawing on the *Heart sūtra* (*Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra*/*Pan-jo po-lo-mi-to hsin ching*), Fa-tsang has claimed that form is identical to emptiness (*se chi k'ung*) and emptiness is identical to form (*k'ung chi se*).[29] (It is assumed that their difference is obvious; indeed, this discussion served to reverse their radical difference.) As discussed earlier, the identity of form and emptiness served to counter the tendency to conceive of the ultimate truth of emptiness as absolutely transcendent to the conventional truth of phenomenal form. Nāgārjuna had asserted that nirvāṇa is saṃsāra, that ultimate truth is immanent in the world of conventional truth.[30] But in spite of this assertion, there was in both India and China a tendency to conceive of the realization of emptiness in terms of

[27] Gimello, *Chih-yen*, pp. 485-86. [28] T. 45, p. 653c.

[29] T. 33, p. 553b.

[30] *Mādhayamikakārikas* 25:19; Streng, *Emptiness*, p. 217.

the obliteration of form. Formless samādhi (wu-hsiang ting) continued to be considered the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice. Emptiness, for many monks, had meant the absence of form. Fa-tsang sought to correct this misunderstanding by speaking of emptiness and form in terms of principle and phenomena. Li not only contains the negative, devaluing implications implied in dependent origination (and emptiness), but it also expresses the affirmative implications implied in that concept. In fact, the use of li seems to stress the positive over the negative as a corrective to what Fa-tsang claimed to be a negative bias in both Indian (Mādhyamika) and Chinese interpretations of emptiness.

Thus Fa-tsang has taken the character li as principle, a character of predominantly affirmative connotations in the Chinese textual tradition, and has identified that character as the principle of dependent origination. Since for Fa-tsang, Nāgārjuna, and other Mahāyānists, dependent origination means emptiness, the identity of li and dependent origination also signifies the identity of li and k'ung.[31] This identity functions to emphasize both the affirmative and the negative implications of dependent origination by bringing both li (affirmation) and k'ung (negation) together into a unity. This identity more fully expresses the truth of dependent origination, since, for Fa-tsang, positive and negative are paradoxically united in ultimate truth.[32]

[31]T. 45, p. 652c.    [32]T. 45, p. 655b.

_Li_ has been defined above as the principle of dependent origination. _Li_ is therefore the fundamental rule that asserts that all phenomena originate dependent on forces beyond their own power. It is equivalent to the claim that all phenomenal forms are empty of their own being and that they therefore cannot make any valid claims to ultimacy. But _li_ is also a phenomenal form; it has the form of a principle or concept. The consistent and thorough application of _li_ as the principle of emptiness thus requires the assertion of its own emptiness. In asserting the emptiness of all phenomenal forms, the principle of emptiness includes its own form. _Li_, too, is empty, which means that its conceptual content can make no claim to ultimate truth. It must be seen as a limited conceptual formulation that is conditioned by its particular form and its situation relative to all other forms.

If _li_ were only a concept, it would have to be judged to be a self-defeating one. Its own conceptual content implies the inability of that content to grasp ultimate truth But for Fa-tsang, _li_ is not only a concept. It is a symbolic concept, one that evokes and expresses an awareness of ultimate truth. Although the conceptual principle of dependent origination or emptiness is incapable of grasping the nature of ultimate reality, it is possible that unconditioned truth may suddenly become manifest (_tun-hsien_) through the symbolic potential in that concept.

The texts of Fa-tsang explicitly refer to the symbolic capacity of certain forms. They claim that there are certain symbolic words that can elicit or evoke the reality that they symbolize. In his commentary on the Awakening of Faith,[33] Fa-tsang clarifies and exemplifies this symbolic capacity. The context of this is a discussion of "suchness" (chên-ju/tathatā), a symbol commonly identified with li.[34] Assuming the perspective of a doubting questioner, he asks himself: If the goal of unconditional emptiness implies the exhaustion and eradication of all name (ming) and form (hsiang), why do you continue to contradict that goal by concentrating on the name and form "suchness"?

> The explanation is that [the word] "suchness" is the ultimate extremity of speaking. After pronouncing this [one] name [ming], then there are no [other] names.[35]
>
> If that is the case then among all names, this is the ultimate extremity. Within the Shê-lun [Mahāyāna Samgraha Śāstra] there are ten kinds of names. The name "suchness" is the tenth and final name, therefore it is called the "ultimate extremity."
>
> One causes words to abolish words. Establishing this extremity of names causes the abolition of names. If this name did not exist, then there would be no means to abolish names. However, if this one name [i.e., suchness] is retained, still one doesn't abolish names. It is just like emitting the sound "silence". If there were not this sound, then the rest of the sounds would not cease. But

[33] T. 44, pp. 252c-253a. [34] T. 45, p. 653c.

[35] The abolition of name and form spoken of in this passage is a reference to nondual emptiness.

> if in order to retain this sound you repeatedly
> say "silence", then you yourself are making noise.
> This too fails to stop sounds.[36]

The ultimate truth of emptiness becomes manifest only through the empty forms that are grounded in emptiness. Only form points to emptiness. If there were no forms symbolic of emptiness, then ultimate truth would not be accessible to human awareness.

When the full realization of unconditioned emptiness becomes manifest (*hsien*) through a particular symbolic form, it both negates and affirms the form that serves as its medium.[37] In the case of *li*, the ultimate truth that is symbolized by the principle of emptiness both negates and affirms the conceptual form of that principle. *Li* is negated because it is not ultimate in itself; ultimate truth transcends all conceptual constructions. *Li*, like all other forms, is empty, and has no self-nature.[38] For Fa-tsang no symbol in the Buddhist tradition is ultimate in itself.

Nevertheless, the form through which ultimate truth becomes manifest is simultaneously affirmed by that truth. The ultimate truth of unconditioned emptiness affirms all forms that participate in it. And since, according to Fa-tsang, all forms are empty, then all forms participate in emptiness. The symbolic potential in all forms is confirmed in this affirmation. Any empty form may become symbolic of emptiness. The equality (*p'ing-têng*) of all conditioned phenomena is established both positively and negatively in the

[36] T. 44, pp. 252c-253a. [37] T. 45, p. 653c. [38] T. 45, p. 653c.

manifestation of ultimate truth. On the one hand, unconditioned emptiness transcends and negates all forms equally;[39] on the other hand, unconditioned emptiness is immanent within and affirms all forms equally.[40]

The question that must be asked at this point is, Why, or on what basis, is the symbol li given an explicit symbolic status above other concepts and forms? If all forms are equally grounded in the truth that is symbolized, then how can one validly differentiate between the symbolic capacity of various forms?

An answer to this question is implicit in Fa-tsang's example above, where he says that certain words, although they themselves contradict silence, do have the capacity to evoke silence. Not all words evoke silence equally; most words conceal and negate silence. There seems to be implied in Fa-tsang's texts a criterion to distinguish between the capacity or potential in various forms to symbolize ultimate truth. This criterion is that those forms are most likely to be symbolic of unconditioned emptiness that direct one away from attachment to particular phenomenal forms and toward a genuine openness to that which transcends form. The concept li fulfills this requirement[41] in that its conceptual content declares

[39] T. 45, p. 654c. [40] T. 45, p. 652a.

[41] In Fa-tsang's texts other symbols also fulfill this criterion. Of these, the most important are k'ung (emptiness), which in this respect is identical to li, and "suchness" (chên-ju/tathatā), which directs one away from attachment to any particular characteristic or dimension of reality to the immediate presence of reality "such as it is."

the dependent, conditioned, empty nature of all forms. It states that no form is permanent and unconditionally worthy of attachment. Furthermore, li, in making that assertion, is not set apart from all empty forms. The principle of emptiness is a self-negating form in such a way that it does not draw attachment to its own form. The principle of dependent origination is itself dependent. If it is asserted that all forms are empty, this includes the conceptual form of that assertion. Self-negation is inherent in the principle itself. Most forms seem to be less transparent; they seem to refer to themselves rather than beyond themselves.

Li directs one beyond its conceptual content to the truth, which neither that concept nor any other concept can grasp. The conceptual content of li leads one away from all concepts to an awareness that is open to unconditioned truth beyond all conceptual formulation. Li proclaims the deficiency of all concepts, including itself, in such a way that it can lead one beyond the illusory attempt to grasp unconditioned truth in a particular form to the immediate, formless presence of that truth.

The effect that the self-denial of the principle of emptiness has is itself identical with the meaning of that principle: that there is nothing to hold onto, nothing to grasp for, not even the principle of emptiness itself.[42] This is communicated non-conceptually through the symbolic capacity in the principle of

[42] T. 45, p. 654b.

emptiness. In self-negation, the final basis for static attachment is undercut, thus evoking the presence of emptiness. In this movement from the symbol to its referent, one arrives at the paradoxical realization that the meaning of the symbol emptiness is elicited in the self-negation of the symbol.

It is on this basis that Fa-tsang claims that li symbolizes a mode of being in which there is "no grasping, no settling down, no abiding,"[43] but rather complete freedom from attachment. Perfect freedom and openness may become fully manifest through the symbol li in a moment of self-transcendence. The content of the symbol expresses this freedom and self-transcendence by leading one away from all particular empty forms, and finally away from its own form. This is expressed by the concept/symbol itself in a limited, conditioned way. Yet, according to Fa-tsang, it is possible that unconditioned truth and freedom may become manifest through the symbol as a medium.

## The Cosmological Significance of Emptiness

The breakthrough of unconditional emptiness reveals the true nature of form through the simultaneous affirmation and negation of form. Reality, which includes empty form, is seen "as it really is" (ju-shih/yathābhūtam) apart from one's projections and attachments. Fa-tsang and other Hua-yen masters have

[43]T. 45, p. 635c.

articulated a cosmological understanding of emptiness based on an awareness of the identity of form and emptiness in "true emptiness." This cosmological understanding is expressed at great length by Fa-tsang and, as will become evident, constitutes a fundamental basis for the practical and soteriological function of his system of thought. Our question here can be posed in either or both of two ways: What are the cosmological implications inherent in the principle of dependent origination? What cosmological understanding most adequately expresses the nature of reality as it is manifest in true emptiness?

In articulating this understanding, Fa-tsang has taken the principle (li) of dependent origination (yüan-ch'i/pratītyasamutpāda) as his primary point of departure in referring to the cosmos as the "interdependently originating dharma-dhātu" (fa-chieh yüan-ch'i). But again, the meaning of dependent origination has been extended beyond its earlier formulations. Although in the Pali Canon there are occasions when dependent origination is applied to various cosmological phenomena,[44] its primary applicability is focused on the twelvefold formula (twelve nidānas) that functions to explain the nature and cause of human suffering. And although Nāgārjuna's dialectical arguments (and those of the Mādhyamika and San-lun schools) can be interpreted in terms of cosmic "relatedness,"[45]

[44]David Kalupahana, Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), pp. 26-30.

[45]Streng, Emptiness, pp. 166-69.

this cosmological dimension is not explicitly articulated in those texts. It is clear that Fa-tsang has extended the meaning of dependent origination beyond these earlier formulations.

In Fa-tsang's and in other Hua-yen texts, dependent origination denotes the cosmological situation of thoroughgoing interdependency. All elements (shih/fa) of phenomenal existence are constituted by and situated within an extremely intricate network of interrelationships. At the basis of this relational web is dependent origination, which constitutes the structure of relation by means of which all relative phenomena are established. All particular phenomena participate in dependent origination. Particular existents arise in relation to or in dependency on all other existents.

Relationality and dependence are fundamental to any particular entity. These are not accidental characteristics that are projected on or added to the phenomena by the subject's interpretation; on the contrary, all entities are established and constituted by the relationship of dependence.

The most fundamental cosmological implication of dependent origination, therefore, is that no phenomenal entity exists independent of all other entities. The identity by means of which entities are distinguished is not established through self-relation independent of reference to other entities. It is not the case that self-constituted entities enter into relation with other previously established entities. Rather, according to Fa-tsang's system, particular existents are fundamentally correlative, and are

thus ontologically grounded in dependent origination. The universality of the principle of dependent origination requires the negation of all independence and autonomy. All existents are fundamentally related to one another in such a way that the difference between them cannot be definitively determined. Thoroughgoing relatedness makes difference relative by linking all empty existents together into a complex network of dependent origination.

This cosmological understanding is a further formulation of the meaning of emptiness. On the basis of their dependent origination, all entities within the cosmos are declared to be empty of "self-nature" or "own-being." However, in this type of discussion, (that is, in the context of cosmology), Fa-tsang has rarely used the character k'ung. Instead, the discussion focuses directly on dependent origination that, for Fa-tsang, more adequately expresses the nature of the cosmological network of interrelations. This is in no sense meant to be a denial of the emptiness doctrine.
The concept of emptiness (k'ung) is affirmed in the discussion of dependent origination as the most adequate conventional understanding of reality as opposed to the understanding that naively presupposes the own-being or self-nature of all phenomena (shih). The notion of dependent origination rules out this naive projection of autonomy (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva) in principle because whatever is dependent is not autonomous. However, dependent origination in

no sense negates the conditioned existence of phenomena,[46] and for this reason dependent origination is, within the context of cosmological discussion, more useful than the concept/symbol emptiness. As shown above, the negative connotations of emptiness had, according to Fa-tsang's perspective, disproportionately dominated the discussion of emptiness.

The notion of dependent origination functions well within the context of Fa-tsang's cosmological system because it maintains both a positive and a negative dimension.[47] Positively, dependent origination implies both the origination of an existent entity and the existence of the entities on which it is dependent; negatively, along with the doctrine of emptiness, it implies the dependent, originated nature of all existents, that is, it implies that all existents are empty of self-nature. The unity of these two sides of dependent origination (positive-existence/negative-emptiness) constitutes the foundation on which Fa-tsang's cosmological understanding is based.[48]

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[46]T. 45, pp. 501a, 504a. [47]T. 45, p. 654c.

[48]Francis Cook has made an insightful analysis of Fa-tsang's appropriation of the Yogācāra doctrine of the three natures (trisvabhāva). His conclusion is that in Fa-tsang's interpretation, this doctrine functions to display the unity of existence and emptiness, the conclusion at which we have arrived here. Fa-tsang's method of accomplishing this is to demonstrate that within each of the three natures (parinispanna, paratantra, parikalpita) both existence and emptiness are present. The effect of this procedure is to reduce the three natures to two in such a way that the Wei-shih tradition (Vijñānavāda) can be shown to substantiate the Hua-yen position. Cook, Hua-yen Buddhism, pp. 57-61.

The unity of these two apparent opposites, emptiness and existence, is expressed in Fa-tsang's texts in another form. In this analysis, all phenomenal existents are seen to have two basic essences (t'i) or characteristics (hsiang). These are called "identical essence" (t'ung-t'i) or the "characteristic of identity" (t'ung-hsiang), and "different essence" (i-t'i) or the "characteristic of difference" (i-hsiang).[49] Both essences or characteristics exist in any phenomenal entity. An entity can be characterized as essentially identical with all others in that all existents are dependently originated and are therefore empty of self-nature. All forms are identical in their emptiness. However, although all existents are identical on the basis of their common emptiness, at the same time each maintains a difference (i) from all others.[50] Different essence or the characteristic of difference refers to the fact that all empty existents make their appearance in a particular, distinct form that is different from all others. This is to say that all entities that originate dependent on others within the network of interrelation are simultaneously existent and empty, different and identical.[51]

Fa-tsang's cosmological understanding, which corresponds to the identity of form and emptiness in "true emptiness," maintains a position that cannot be characterized by either extreme monism (identity) or extreme pluralism (difference). Fa-tsang's position

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[49] T. 45, p. 503b. [50] T. 45, p. 655bc. [51] T. 45, p. 651a.

is one of identity within difference or difference within identity. The two opposing elements, identity and difference, are held together in a nonobstructing (wu-ai) unity. "The dharmadhātu is perfectly one and perfectly many."[52] A position of radical identity alone (monism) is inadequate for Fa-tsang because it abstracts an unchanging essence from the multiplicity of experience in such a way that experience itself is disregarded. On the other hand, a position of radical difference (pluralism) is inadequate in that it denies the ground of existence in the structure of relatedness. Whereas each of these positions is inadequate in itself, Fa-tsang adopts the polar element that is emphasized in each and brings them together into a unity.[53] In Fa-tsang's system, identity and difference, emptiness and existence are interrelated in such a way that neither element has meaning apart from its opposite. Emptiness and existence are related in such a way that emptiness is the emptiness of existence; existence is the existence of emptiness.

For Fa-tsang, a third and more adequate alternative to radical identity or radical difference arises from an understanding of dependent origination. Dependent origination means thoroughgoing interrelatedness, which avoids the dichotomy between identity and difference. Interpreted in terms of dependent

[52]T. 45, p. 651a. [53]T. 45, p. 654c.

origination or "true emptiness," Fa-tsang can either affirm both identity and difference or deny both elements in this opposition.[54] But in either case both elements in the polarity are held together in a unity in such a way that an exclusive choice between two opposing interpretations is avoided. Interrelatedness or interdependence implies that no particular entity can be isolated from all others. Particulars exist only to the extent that they are interdependent; nothing exists independently. On the other hand, through the complex network of intercausality, particular entities do originate (dependently) and come into existence,[55] each manifesting a form that in some respect is unique. All existents are linked together into a nondifferent (pu i) identity (chi), but simultaneously retain a distinct form.[56]

In Fa-tsang's texts it is often the case that identity and interdependence are discussed in terms of the doctrine of interpenetration or mutual penetration (hsiang-ju).[57] In accordance with imagery drawn from the Avataṃsaka sūtra (Hua-yen ching), the idea of the interpenetration of all phenomena is often purposefully couched in startling language that violates all conventional understanding. The meaning of mutual penetration is that each phenomenon penetrates to the very essence of every other phenomenon

[54] T. 45, p. 501b. See Cook, Treatise on the Five Doctrines, p. 438.

[55] T. 44, p. 251c. [56] T. 44, p. 252b. [57] T. 45, pp. 669c-670a.

because of their basic constituent interrelationship.[58] The causal and conditioning influence of each entity penetrates to every other entity. Even the nature and existence of the remotest phenomenon is fundamentally affected by any other phenomenon. Every existing individual both influences and is influenced by every other existent. "All dharmas depend on and assist each other."[59] A change in one phenomenon originates dependent on the influence of all others. At the same time, this change affects all others.

Since nothing exists independently, nothing can be understood in isolation. Particulars exist only as parts of an interrelated whole.[60] Since each part penetrates into every other part and thus penetrates the whole, each part is said to contain (shê) the whole.[61] Furthermore, the whole contained in the part necessarily contains all other parts, including the part within which it is contained.[62] This process of interpenetration and containment can be extended infinitely in either direction.

One of Fa-tsang's biographies claims that when Fa-tsang was summoned by Empress Wu to demonstrate the doctrine of interpenetration, he set up a model as an aid to thinking through the implications of interrelatedness.[63] The account claims that the model was composed of numerous mirrors, all facing one another in such a way that a room was entirely lined with interreflecting

58 T. 45, p. 654a. 59 T. 45, p. 627c. 60 T. 45, p. 508a.

61 T. 45, p. 654a. 62 T. 45, p. 508a. 63 T. 50, p. 732ab.

mirrors. An image of the Buddha was placed in the center of the room. He pointed out that each mirror not only reflected the central image of the Buddha, but also each reflected the reflections of the image in all other mirrors. Each mirror image, representing each particular entity, penetrated into all others and contained all others. This process was demonstrated to be effective ad infinitum. The infinite interreflections in Fa-tsang's model were claimed to be analogous to the interpenetration of all particular existents.

The meaning of interdependence can be further illustrated in terms of another theoretical model which Fa-tsang develops at great length in his detailed expository work The Treatise on the Five Teachings (Wu chiao chang).[64] This model entails viewing the relationship between a building and the various parts that compose the whole building.

The building as a whole represents the total network of interrelated elements of existence. Any one particular existent has its existence only within this web or relationships, the whole building. A rafter becomes a rafter only in relationship to all other parts that constitute the building and in relationship to the whole building.[65] Its identity as a rafter is dependent

[64] T. 45, pp. 507c-508c. See Cook, Treatise on the Five Doctrines, p. 530, and Cook, Hua-yen Buddhism, chapter 6.

[65] T. 45, pp. 507c-508a.

on both the whole and all other parts of the building. If the structure were not a building, that piece of wood would not be a rafter.[66] This dependent origination of the part implies that it is empty, and in this respect it is identical (<u>chi</u>) with all other similarly dependent parts.

From another perspective it can be said that any individual part such as a rafter possesses complete power to create the whole building.[67] Without this one part, the building would not be the building that it is. Each part is essential to the whole in spite of the dependent origination of each part. The whole and its parts are interrelated; each completes and establishes the other.[68] Focusing further on this one part, a rafter, the text claims that not only does it cause the whole to be established, but it also has the power to be a total condition for all other parts.[69] Without the rafter, no building is complete; without the completion of a whole building, the other parts are not parts (of the whole). Other parts receive their existing identity as tiles, doors, and so on, only in relation to the whole, which as we have seen, is totally dependent on the one rafter.[70] In this sense the part penetrates and contains the whole and all individual parts of the whole.

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[66]T. 45, pp. 507c–508a. [67]T. 45, p. 508a. [68]T. 45, p. 508a.
[69]T. 45, p. 508a. [70]T. 45, p. 508a.

The text works with this model at great length, drawing further conclusions concerning the situation of interdependency.[71] Implicit in this discussion is the twofold structure described earlier in this section: the opposition between emptiness and existence. These polar elements are derived from Fa-tsang's interpretation of dependent origination. As we have seen, they reflect a positive and a negative dimension in dependent origination. In terms of the present discussion, these are two ways of understanding any particular phenomenon. First, from a negative perspective, the dependent origination of any phenomena means that it is empty of own-being. The part lacks its self-identity and power of existence; it is conditioned by all other existent parts and by the whole. From this perspective the phenomenal part is said to be "concealed" (yin) in a negative identity.[72]

Second, in its positive dimension, the dependent origination of all phenomena means that any one particular part exists and it exists as a cause or condition for the whole of existence. From this perspective total power is attributed to any one phenomenon that exists distinct from the remainder of existence that it conditions.[73] Focusing on the positive dimension of a particular entity, it is said to be "revealed" (hsien) in

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[71]For a more detailed discussion of this topic see Cook, Hua-yen Buddhism, pp. 75–89.

[72]T. 45, p. 669c. [73]T. 45, p. 654c.

bringing its conditioning power to the fore rather than concealed in a negative identity.

By continually shifting perspectives between positive and negative, between existence and emptiness, Fa-tsang brings out a polar tension in dependent origination that is latent in conventional interpretations of dependent origination as emptiness. In a cosmological discussion of dependent origination as interrelatedness, the positive dimension of the doctrine must be explicitly present for the doctrine to have any meaning at all. Formulated as his own version of the "middle path," Fa-tsang claims that to grasp either positive or negative dimension in isolation from its polar complement is to fall into one of the two traditional Buddhist errors of eternalism or annihilationism.[74] The dependently originating cosmos (fa-chieh yüan-ch'i) avoids the conclusions of static being (eternalism) and nihilistic becoming (annihilationism) by demonstrating both that conditionality is multidirectional (cause conditions effect, and effect conditions cause) and that emptiness and existence are relative to and require each other.[75]

As is the case with all models, the model of the building is limited in terms of how far the analogy may be extended. In this case the most crucial limitation is that the model is static, while, for Fa-tsang, the dependently originating dharmadhātu is intrinsically dynamic.[76] The cosmos is always in process,

[74]T. 33, p. 553a. [75]T. 45, p. 668c. [76]T. 45, p. 634b.

constantly changing. A fundamentally dynamic reality cannot be adequately described in static, clearly distinct categories of thought, nor can it be thoroughly dealt with in terms of models that lack dynamic characteristics. Although it is true that any existent entity originates and is established dependent on phenomena co-existing at that particular time, it is also the case that existent phenomena are conditioned by their location within the temporal, historical process. All existents are historically situated and stand in a conditioning and conditioned relationship to all past and future phenomena. Fa-tsang claims that past, present, and future interpenetrate and contain each other.[77] Like phenomena that make their appearance in each of the three divisions of time, past, present, and future cannot be isolated from each other; they are interrelated in such a way that they are mutually conditioned and not independently meaningful.[78] The sudden manifestation of unconditioned emptiness is the manifestation of eternity within time. Since one moment of time penetrates into all moments and includes all moments, any moment can be the locus for the presence of eternity.

Although cause and effect may be isolated from each other in the temporal process, they are fundamentally interrelated.[79]

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[77] T. 45, pp. 506c-507a. See Cook, Treatise on the Five Doctrines, pp. 519-20.

[78] T. 45, p. 670a. [79] T. 42, p. 220c.

Moving from past toward the future, it is clear that the effect originates dependent on the cause. A prior moment conditions all subsequent moments. But Fa-tsang also understands that the conditioning process flows in both directions. A cause is only a cause in view of its subsequent effect. The meaning of any event or phenomenon is always in the process of unfolding.[80]

This temporal and spatial interfusion are aspects of what Hua-yen masters refer to as "shih shih wu-ai" (the nonobstruction of all phenomena).[81] Shih shih wu-ai is the enlightened vision of all phenomena in which no obstruction or conflict exists.[82] The world of the bodhisattva is the dependently originating cosmos. The bodhisattva sees the intricate interrelating and interpenetrating of all temporal/spatial phenomena that occur without obstruction. The dependently originating dharmadhātu is the "shih shih wu ai" dharmadhātu.

Whereas "skillful means" necessitated the negation of all phenomena at the earliest stage of the path, the mature bodhisattva, who knows the emptiness of shih, is freely involved amidst the plenitude of phenomena. But this is not shih in the conventional

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[80] In an essay that compares Fa-tsang and Spinoza, Charles Hartshorne seems to assume that a phenomenon that influences or conditions subsequent phenomena is not itself conditioned by its effects. For Fa-tsang, any relationship affects both its elements. C. Hartshorne, "Theism in Asian and Western Thought," Philosophy East and West, vol. 24, no. 4 (October, 1978), 401-11.

[81] T. 45, p. 654a. [82] T. 45, p. 654a.

understanding. No attribution of self-nature or own-being is made; no attachments are formed. Shih are no longer idolatrous expressions of individual, autonomous self-hood. When the bodhisattva looks at shih he sees the ultimate truth of li through shih.[83] All shih are expressions of li; li is fully contained in all shih. Since all shih are empty, unconditional emptiness becomes manifest there.

Although it was initially necessary to direct the mind away from phenomena in order for one to understand the lack of self-hood both subjectively and objectively, with the sudden manifestation of full emptiness the mind is directed back to the world via a new mode of being. In this new mode of being the bodhisattva is freed from the constraints and obstructions involved in conventional truth and language.[84] Phenomena are seen in an entirely different way; they are inherently dynamic and interrelated.

In view of shih shih wu-ai, the bodhisattva understands that there is "no stationing" (pu-chu), "no lodging" (wu-chi),[85] and hence no grasping, no attachments. Understanding this, he is free to "exist as he is" (wan-jan) in the world of phenomena. There is no need to escape the world, no need to push beyond empty phenomena.

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[83]T. 45, p. 637c.

[84]T. 45, p. 253b.

[85]T. 45, p. 633b.

Phenomena themselves are expressive of absolute truth.[86] The new mode of being that is opened up in the vision of shih shih wu-ai confers an infinite value on life in the world.[87]

## The Dialectic of the One Mind

The doctrine of the One Mind (i-hsin) in Fa-tsang's texts establishes the most basic overall structure within his system of thought. All other doctrinal elements, including emptiness, take their appropriate places within this fundamental scheme. This basic structure can be initially described as the dialectical movement of the One Mind from original identity, to differentiation, and its return to identity through difference. The purpose of this section is to describe the three basic steps in this dialectical process in such a way that an understanding of the overall structure of Fa-tsang's system of thought will be facilitated. This description will place Fa-tsang's understanding of emptiness within its basic context to lend clarity to our interpretation of emptiness. To carry out this description, several other ideas (such as Fa-tsang's interpretation of the tathāgatagarbha) will be introduced and situated within the systematic whole of Fa-tsang's

[86] T. 45, p. 652c.

[87] This last point, which was made doctrinally by the Hua-yen masters, was soon thereafter concretely expressed in the Ch'an schools. Ultimate truth resides in shih whether in "chopping wood and carrying water," or in the rock garden or drop of morning dew. The truth may become manifest through any temporal, finite phenomenon.

thought. This section will further serve to establish a point of departure for the discussion of paradox in Fa-tsang's thought in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Fa-tsang's greatest inspiration for this aspect of his system of thought is derived from the Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna (Ta-ch'êng ch'i-hsin lun),[88] a short compendium of Mahāyāna doctrine that had foremost significance in the formation of the Sui/T'ang schools of Chinese Buddhism. Although there are numerous commentaries on the Awakening of Faith, Fa-tsang's commentary has, since his time, been considered the most authoritative interpretation of this recondite, yet suggestive, text in both China and Japan.[89] The portions of Fa-tsang's commentary[90] where he discusses and interprets the One Mind will serve as the source for this section of the dissertation.

The "One Mind" is a primary religious symbol in Hua-yen and several other forms of Chinese Buddhism. Its conceptual content is

[88]This text is traditionally claimed to be a Paramārtha translation (550 A.D.) of a Sanskrit text by Aśvaghosha. Although two Chinese versions exist (the other being a Śikṣānanda translation), no Sanskrit original is extant. Most modern Buddhologists doubt this traditional claim concerning the text's authorship and attribute it to one or another sixth-century Chinese school of thought.

[89]Yoshito S. Hakeda, trans., The Awakening of Faith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 9-10. This version of the text is the best English translation available.

[90]Ta-ch'eng ch'i-hsin lun i chi, T. 44, pp. 240-87.

generally left unspecified since what it refers to is essentially mysterious (hsüan) and unspeakable (pu-ke shuo).[91] What is said about the One Mind is paradoxical. The One Mind is unconditioned and unchanging, yet in accordance with conditions it changes.[92] In order to clarify the context of this assertion and the idea of the One Mind we begin by carefully describing the dialectical movement of the One Mind in each of its three stages: identity, difference, and return to identity through difference.

## Identity

The One Mind in its self-identity is permanent, unchanging (pu-pien),[93] undifferentiated (pu-i),[94] and nondual (wu-êrh).[95] It is unconditionally equal (p'ing-têng) or identical (i) in that it is not differentiated temporally or spatially. Synonyms for the One Mind are "true mind" (chên-hsin);[96] suchness (chên-ju);[97] Buddha (fo);[98] thus (ju),[99] as in "thus come" (ju-lai);[100] dharma-nature (fa-hsing) or nature (hsing);[101] principle (li);[102] substance or essence (t'i);[103] and emptiness (k'ung).[104] The One Mind in its suchness aspect is emptiness itself. And that to

[91]T. 44, p. 253b. [92]T. 44, p. 252a. [93]T. 44, p. 254ab.
[94]T. 44, p. 255a. [95]T. 45, p. 629a. [96]T. 45, p. 640a.
[97]T. 45, p. 634b. [98]T. 45, p. 640b. [99]T. 33, p. 405a.
[100]T. 33, p. 405a. [101]T. 45, p. 638c. [102]T. 45, p. 651a.
[103]T. 44, p. 252c. [104]T. 45, pp. 634c-635a.

which the symbol emptiness refers is not itself empty (_pu-k'ung_).[105] That is, it is neither dependent (_yüan_) nor originated (_ch'i_); it is unconditioned and eternal.

Although it is the source (_yüan_) and the origin or root (_pên_) of all that exists (_yu_), in its self-nature (_tzŭ-hsing_) it does not exist nor has it ever existed. Existence (_yu_) is conditioned and temporal; the One Mind precedes time, it is unconditionally timeless. The One Mind is not an existent entity. It is ontologically more fundamental than existence, but it is presupposed in the existence of anything at all.

Fa-tsang employs two metaphors to suggest the relationship between the ground of existence and particular existents. The first is the relation between the basis, gold, and the particular entities formed from gold (e.g., rings).[106] The second and similar metaphor that occurs in various Buddhist texts since the _Laṅkāvatāra sūtra_ is the relation between the water in the ocean and its concrete manifestations in the form of waves.[107] Gold and water are here analogous to the formless, unconditioned basis of all conditioned form. Although both metaphors suggest that the One Mind is the substance or material out of which is shaped particular entities, this suggestion must be qualified by the frequent

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[105] T. 32, p. 576b; T. 44, p. 253c.

[106] T. 33, p. 405b.

[107] T. 44, p. 254c.

assertions in Fa-tsang's texts that substance or essence (t'i) is emptiness or Mind.[108]

The One Mind as emptiness or suchness is the prereflective, original awareness (pên-chio) that underlies all subsequent, reflective awareness;[109] it is that fundamental awareness that precedes all differentiation that arises in language and thought. The One Mind cannot itself be grasped as a differentiated object, yet it is presupposed and already present when any object is grasped. This original consciousness is one of identity and emptiness, yet, from this foundation all distinctions emerge and take form in time and space.

Differentiation

According to the Awakening of Faith, the One Mind, under the conditioning influence of ignorance, assumes a dual nature.[110] The conjunction of these two aspects constitutes reality as it appears to both enlightened beings and the unenlightened.

> On the basis of the Dharma of the One Mind, there are two aspects. What are these two? The first aspect is Mind as true suchness. The second aspect is Mind as origination and cessation [shêng-ssŭ/samsāra]. These two aspects each universally include all dharmas.[111]

The first of these two aspects, "Mind as true suchness," is the unconditioned, unchanging identity described above. As

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[108] T. 44, p. 252c; T. 45, pp. 634c-635a. [109] T. 44, p. 254c.

[110] T. 32, p. 576c. [111] T. 32, p. 576a.

the self-nature of Mind, it eternally abides, undifferentiated and unmoved. However, the second of these two aspects, Mind as origination and cessation, refers to the differentiation and movement of Mind in which the forms of conventional awareness are created.[112] While simultaneously retaining its identity, the One Mind moves to express (piao) itself as the world of difference. Under the influence of the "winds of ignorance,"[113] the One Mind creates the conventional world of birth and death, the continual origination and cessation of phenomena or form. Furthermore, the Awakening of Faith claims that these two aspects, formless identity and differentiated form, are mutually inclusive and inseparable.[114]

The movement of the One Mind out of its pure identity is the activity through which all phenomenal forms arise.[115] In this activity, unconditioned Mind appears in the form of conditioned phenomena that are differentiated temporally and spatially, and that arise and cease dependent on various conditions (yüan-ch'i).[116] The origination of distinct phenomena is coterminus with the rise of language and thought through which the differentiation of Mind is conceived. Undifferentiated consciousness, the One Mind, is the foundation from which all distinct form arises. Although it remains as it is, unchanged and unconditioned, the appearance of distinct form obscures its underlying presence. In the

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[112] T. 45, p. 640a. [113] T. 32, p. 576c. [114] T. 32, p. 576a.
[115] T. 44, p. 253a. [116] T. 45, p. 627b.

movement of the One Mind, emptiness, the primal awareness (pên-chio), becomes overlaid with distinct phenomenal forms that appear to be differentiated in terms of their self-nature. This self-alienation of the One Mind constitutes life as saṃsāra and suffering.

In addition to the manner of expression given in the Awakening of Faith, Fa-tsang also describes this basic ontological structure of identity and difference in terms of numerous other sets of symbols. For our purposes the most important connections to make are, first, between the "One Mind as suchness" and emptiness, and, second, between the differentiation of Mind and phenomenal form. Therefore, the relationship established earlier in Chapter III between emptiness and form is the same as that discussed here between the One Mind and its differentiation. Various other ways of describing this basic relationship are numerous in Fa-tsang's texts. Mind in its self-identity is the original foundation or root (pên) on which the derivative, the branches (mo), i.e., phenomena, are established.[117] Phenomenal forms are related to Mind as particular rings are related to the gold substance from which they are formed,[118] and as individual waves are to the one body of water out of which they continually arise and disappear.[119]

There are two interpretations that Fa-tsang gives to traditional doctrines and concepts that are creatively employed to express the differentiation of the One Mind. The first of these

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[117]T. 45, p. 635b. [118]T. 35, p. 405b. [119]T. 45, p. 652c.

is an innovative interpretation of the meaning of "thus come," the Buddha (tathāgata/ju-lai).[120] The first Chinese character in this compound is ju, which can be translated as "thus." Since it is also the case that the character ju, standing by itself in Chinese Buddhist texts, means suchness (also chên-ju and ju-ju), Fa-tsang identifies the "thus" in "thus-come" with suchness. And since suchness is emptiness, or unconditioned Mind, ju here signifies the unchanging, undifferentiated identity of the One Mind. The second character in the compound, lai, denotes the activity of coming. The compound ju-lai, therefore, for Fa-tsang, expresses the activity in which the One Mind as suchness comes forth (lai) out of its identity into the world of difference and form, while simultaneously retaining its self-nature as "thusness" (ju).[121]

The second doctrine that Fa-tsang draws on to express the movement of the One Mind is the Chinese compound hsing-ch'i, which literally means "nature arising."[122] The doctrine of nature arising is an important point of discussion in Chapter 32 of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra. There, as in the writings of the first two Hua-yen patriarchs, Tu-shun and Chih-yen, "nature arising" referred to the arising out of dormancy, or the manifestation of the innate Buddhahood (tathāgatagarbha) within all human beings. Nature (hsing) is the capacity in all beings to realize emptiness, which is the realization

[120] T. 35, p. 405a. [121] T. 35, p. 405a. [122] T. 35, p. 405ab.

of the Buddha within.[123] Ch'i means to arise, so that nature arising meant the arising of one's true nature, enlightenment.[124]

Even though Fa-tsang accepted that interpretation of the doctrine from the Hua-yen Sūtra and from his teacher, Chih-yen, he gave the doctrine an additional interpretation. Fa-tsang saw in the characters hsing and ch'i the two aspects of the One Mind, unconditioned suchness and conditioned origination and cessation.[125] Hsing refers to that which has own-being (svabhāva), an unchanging and unconditioned nature. Hsing is permanent and eternal and, for Fa-tsang, corresponds to the self-identity of the One Mind. Ch'i, arising, expresses the conditioned process of origination and cessation. "Arising corresponds to the ten thousand differences, therefore it is called the flourishing of the many."[126] Thus hsing ch'i could mean the arising of the One Mind out of its identity in the manifestation of difference, while it simultaneously retains its nature as suchness.[127] Fa-tsang expresses this new interpretation in a contemplation on nature arising.

> As to penetrating nature arising, this refers to the emptiness of the object's substance; there is nothing that exists. As to marks, there are none that are not exhausted. There is only one true nature. By means of emptiness, self-nature is not maintained. While simultaneously preserving essence, it is the case that all dharmas are completed. For this reason, the ten thousand

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[123] T. 35, p. 405ab. [124] T. 35, p. 405ab. [125] T. 35, p. 405ab.

[126] T. 45, p. 639b. [127] T. 35, p. 405ab.

> images numerously arise. Although the ten thousand images numerously arise, yet they eternally do not lose the one essence of the true substance. What arises constantly does not arise, and non-arising constantly arises. On this basis, non-arising is identical with arising. When there is non-arising, then it is displayed in the Dharmadhātu.[128]

In the Awakening of Faith, the differentiation of the One Mind is caused by an external influence. The "winds of ignorance" are said to obstruct the pure identity of Mind.[129] Ignorance (wu-ming) is the tendency to differentiate form on the basis of its self-nature, thus setting up the bases for attachment. But that text does not deal clearly with the further question of the source of ignorance. What is the relationship between the One Mind and the "winds of ignorance" that cause the differentiation of Mind? Is ignorance an autonomous reality apart from Mind, and perhaps even more fundamental since it seems to condition the One Mind? These questions are left unanswered in the Awakening of Faith in such a way that a ba[illegible] dualism between Mind and ignorance is implied. Furthermore, since the source of differentiated phenomena seems ultimately to lie in ignorance rather than in Mind itself, phenomenal form is given a predominantly negative, illusory connotation.

Fa-tsang's interpretation of the dialectic of the One Mind carefully avoids setting ignorance apart from Mind.[130] The two

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[128] T. 45, p. 632b. [129] T. 32, p. 576c.

[130] T. 45, pp. 635c-636a.

are inseparable, so that ignorance and the origination and cessation of phenomenal forms derive from Mind itself.[131] The positing of form and saṃsāra is the activity of the One Mind itself and not an extrinsic conditioning of Mind. Fa-tsang's interpretation of the doctrine of "nature arising" clearly claims that the One Mind (i.e., nature/hsing) arises (ch'i) in and of itself to create the world of phenomenal forms. No external agent is responsible. Mind freely gives rise to phenomena. In this interpretation lies the potential to understand phenomena not as the illusory obscuration of true reality, but as conditioned expressions of unconditioned reality. Whatever forms of consciousness appear can be seen to derive ultimately from suchness itself.

The creation (tso) of phenomenal form by the One Mind must not be considered, however, as a singular act at the beginning of time. According to Fa-tsang, both ignorance and form are "beginningless" (wu-shih).[132] The movement of the One Mind from identity to difference is not a temporal transition. There is identity only in the presence of difference so that the two aspects of the One Mind are mutually dependent (hsiang-i).[133] Although the dichotomy between pên (origin) and mo (derivative) may suggest a temporal sequence, what Fa-tsang seems to mean is that suchness is ontologically more fundamental than the forms in which it expresses itself. Neither, however, exists independent of the

[131] T. 44, p. 254bc. [132] T. 44, p. 267a. [133] T. 44, p. 254b.

other. Creation is a continuous activity that takes place throughout the dharmadhātu in every instant. But in that activity form and its source are simultaneously present. The cosmos constantly arises (hêng-ch'i), and this activity, which constitutes saṃsāra, is without beginning (wu-shih).[134]

The simultaneity of suchness or emptiness and form derives from their ultimate nonduality (wu-êrh). The essence (t'i) of Mind and its function (yung), suchness and phenomena, emptiness and form are nondifferent (pu-i).[135]

> Mind is not separate from the appearance of birth and death. Therefore, as to the appearance of birth and death, there are none that are not absolute truth. Saṃsāra is not separate from the characteristics of Mind. If they are not separated in this way, then it is called united.[136]

> When the true and the false are united, then there is that which is created. This then is the harmonious fusing of the fundamental and the derivative; their boundaries are not differentiated. This is why it is called nondifferent.[137]

Saṃsāra is not a separate realm apart from suchness or Mind. They are essentially identical.

> As to nonorigination and cessation, this is the Tathāgatagarbha pure Mind. Moving, it creates origination and cessation, but is not separate from them. Therefore it is called "united". It does not refer to another existence; saṃsāra is united together with the True. Referring to the Mind of saṃsāra, and the saṃsāra of Mind, there are no dual characteristics.[138]

[134]T. 45, p. 668b. [135]T. 44, p. 255a. [136]T. 44, p. 254c.

[137]T. 44, p. 255a. [138]T. 44, p. 254c.

If we understand the identity and emptiness of Mind to be the prereflective awareness that underlies and provides the basis for all linguistic and conceptual differentiation, then the identity between the two can be seen in the fact that what is differentiated is Mind itself. Differentiated form, origination and cessation, and saṃsāra are all "Mind only" (wei-hsin).[139] They have no other essence (t'i).

> As to the origination and cessation of Mind, it causes the completion of ignorance (wu-ming). On account of ignorance, samsāra is completed. The mind of saṃsāra arises from original awareness (pên-chio), and their nondual essences are not mutually separated.[140]

> What arises (ch'i) is only the arising of nature (hsing), and by extension, the effect and function are only the functioning (yung) of this true nature.[141]

But even though form is emptiness, it is possible to know and perceive only form without being aware of the ground of form in formless Mind. It is possible to be aware of difference alone without seeing the fundamental identity between differentiated forms. And in fact this possibility is universally actualized among human beings.[142] The One Mind negates itself (identity) in its creation of origination and cessation (difference). The negation of identity is completed in the fact that all human beings initially find themselves in a world of difference, opposition, and conflict. The alienation of all distinct minds from the One Mind

[139]T. 45, p. 640a. [140]T. 44, p. 254c. [141]T. 35, p. 405b.

[142]T. 45, p. 668b.

itself creates human life of saṃsāra and suffering. However, since form is still essentially emptiness, since phenomena distinguished by the mind are still Mind, the possibility of a "return" (kuei) to identity from difference is inherent in the human condition.

## Return

According to Fa-tsang's texts, enlightenment is the process in which one returns to the source (i.e., identity, emptiness) from one's alienation in the world of form and distinctions.[143] After having participated in a mode of being in which one was aware of form alone, one returns to an awareness of suchness, the identity that grounds all form. From a conventional perspective, this is the process in which the "self" realizes the true emptiness of all forms, including the form "self." From an enlightened perspective, however, this is the process in which Mind realizes its true identity as Mind. Having differentiated itself from itself, the One Mind returns to its original unity and identity. The return to identity, or enlightenment, does not require a radical ontological transformation since both identity and difference are Mind. There is only the One Mind, whether in identity or differentiated from itself. Enlightenment is the realization of what already is, and always has been, the case.

From a personal perspective, however, this process does entail a radical transformation. What is unconditionally

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[143] T. 45, p. 669b.

transformed is one's mode of awareness or mode of being in the world. Although what is differentiated is still Mind, the mode of awareness that understands the ultimate identity of all forms of existence is radically different from one in which no identity is seen in a world of difference.

In discussing the process of enlightenment, or the return of the One Mind to its identity in emptiness, Fa-tsang has drawn on traditional Mahāyāna Buddhist sources that articulate the idea of the "womb of the Tathāgata," the tathāgatagarbha (ju-lai tsang). The tathāgatagarbha doctrine appeared in some early Mahāyāna sūtras and śāstras in response to unanswered questions in the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras and Mādhyamika śāstras. Although earlier Western scholarship has tended to situate this doctrine within the sphere of Yogācāra thought (because of its presence in important Yogācāra texts such as the Laṅkāvatāra sūtra), more recent work has shown that the doctrine existed prior to and independent of Yogācāra ideas, and may have constituted one line of Mahāyāna thought alongside Mādhyamika and Yogācāra.[144] In any case, this was Fa-tsang's conclusion. For Fa-tsang, tathāgatagarbha thought is a separate tradition beyond Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. According to Fa-tsang's

[144]David S. Ruegg, La theorie du tathagatagarbha et du gotra (Paris: Ecole Francoise d'Extreme-Orient, 1969), pp. 1-15; and Alex and Hideko Wayman, The Lions Roar of Queen Śrīmālā (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), p. 53.

classification of Buddhist teachings (p'an chiao), tathāgatagarbha thought is considered to be the "final teaching" (chung-chiao) of the Mahāyāna, whereas Mādhyamika and Yogācāra are "earlier" stages of Mahāyāna thought (shih-chiao). But, as will be shown, this elevated status of the tathāgatagarbha doctrine was only possible for Fa-tsang through a creative reworking of the traditional tathāgatagarbha idea in view of Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, and the Awakening of Faith.

In Indian texts like the Śrīmālā sūtra and the Ratnagotra-vibhāga,[145] the tathāgatagarbha refers to the inner potential for enlightenment within all human beings. This potential is given concrete imagery, either as seeds whose fruition is Buddhahood or as a womb in which the seeds of enlightenment mature. The doctrine accounts for the innate possibility of enlightenment, and functions to engender effort in religious practices such as meditation since the task is pictured as one of bringing to maturity what is already potentially present by gradually removing extrinsic defilements.

In Chinese Buddhist thought the tathāgatagarbha idea became increasingly important in the sixth and seventh centuries because it seemed to lend theoretical confirmation to two important concerns: the concern for universal enlightenment and the concern

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[145]Both of these texts exist in English translation. Alex and Hideko Wayman, The Lions Roar of Queen Śrīmālā; Jikido Takasaki, A Study on the Ratnogotravibhaga.

for the immediate possibility for enlightenment _in this life_. Ever since the major controversy over universal enlightenment in the early fifth century,[146] most Chinese Buddhist thinkers accepted the notion of the Buddha-nature (_fo-hsing_) inherent in all human beings. No human being was thought to be excluded from the possibility of enlightenment. The most notable exception to this was Fa-tsang's rival Hsüan-tsang, whose interpretation of _Yogācāra_, deriving from the Indian master Dharmapāla, excluded certain human beings from enlightenment on the basis of their intrinsic lack of that potential. Although Hsüan-tsang's influence was pervasive, the issue was eventually decided in Fa-tsang's favor as most Chinese Buddhist thinkers consented to the universality of enlightenment and the presence of the _tathāgatagarbha_ in all human beings.

The idea of the _tathāgatagarbha_ also seemed to confirm for some Chinese Buddhists that enlightenment was not a far off, distant goal achievable only after many lifetimes of arduous effort. Since the Buddha in the form of the _tathāgatagarbha_ is immanent within, enlightenment is only a matter of bringing that reality to fruition, and not a matter of achieving a complete and total self-transformation.

Fa-tsang's interpretation of the _tathāgatagarbha_ doctrine coincided with these two conclusions, and in addition gave them

[146] See Kenneth Ch'en, _Buddhism in China_ (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 113-16, 128-29.

further justification and philosophical foundation by reconciling the tathāgatagarbha idea with the doctrine of the One Mind of the Awakening of Faith. According to his interpretation the tathāgatagarbha, as the innate potential for enlightenment, is the eternal presence of Mind underlying the conventional awareness of form and differentiation. Although the One Mind is alienated from itself in unenlightened human consciousness, the potential for enlightenment, or the "return" to Mind, is still present in consciousness as the underlying tathāgatagarbha, suchness, or Mind itself. Emptiness or suchness that lies hidden beneath all discrimination of form is the eternal presence of the Buddha within. The return of Mind to itself, or the process of enlightenment, is brought about on the basis of this innate presence of the Buddha, the tathāgatagarbha.[147]

Even if religious practice is seen to be the cause of enlightenment, the cause and source of religious practice is the tathāgatagarbha, the Buddha within. When the tathāgatagarbha begins to manifest itself in human consciousness by effecting an "internal permeation" (nei-hsün),[148] one comes to perceive emptiness in form, which is the nature of the "return to the source" (kuei-yüan)[149] in the One Mind. The One Mind is emptiness itself, and the tathāgatagarbha is that eternal emptiness underlying Mind's alienation in the awareness of autonomous (tzŭ-hsing) form.

[147] T. 44, p. 251ab. [148] T. 44, p. 271c. [149] T. 45, p. 669b.

When the *tathāgatagarbha* first begins to make its presence felt, it becomes manifest as faith (*hsin*). *Hsin* is faith in the "original source" (*kên-pên*), which is "suchness."[150] This initial movement of the *tathāgatagarbha* is the "awakening of faith," the arising of enlightened mind (*p'u-t'i hsin/bodhicitta*),[151] or nature arising (*hsing-ch'i*).[152] The experience of faith is the first glimmering awareness that "you are the Buddha," that human life is the life of the One Mind. This awareness is the arising (*ch'i*) of nature (*hsing*) or Mind, and its return to itself.

Both the notions of the *tathāgatagarbha* and the dialectic of the One Mind together give Fa-tsang further ontological basis for his doctrine of sudden enlightenment. Enlightenment occurs instantaneously in the realization that "you are the Buddha," that individual awareness is taken up into the awareness of the One Mind. A gradual, accumulating process is not the case because what one becomes aware of is precisely what is already the case. One need not create or achieve Buddhahood or the situation of emptiness; it is already there, fully completed.[153] This is expressed in a number of ways, as the differentiation of Mind from itself, or as the emptiness underlying form, or as the *tathāgatagarbha*, the ever-present Buddha within individual beings.

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[150] T. 44, p. 282a. [151] T. 45, p. 628a. [152] T. 35, p. 405ab.

[153] T. 45, p. 639b.

Although one may go on indefinitely not recognizing the fullness and identity of the reality in which one lives, when the recognition does occur it is sudden and instantaneous.[154] No gradual approach is possible. One simply and suddenly becomes aware of reality "such as it is." Suchness becomes manifest in a radical breakthrough because it is not a form of knowledge like all other knowledge that can be accumulated and compounded sequentially; suchness is indivisible and nondual. It is not knowledge but is the immediate awareness of the ground or foundation of all knowledge. It is permanent and eternally present whether one is aware of it or not.[155] And when it does become present to awareness, it breaks through the forms of consciousness in an overpowering, immediate experience.

Both the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine and the doctrine of the One Mind also function to answer the question of the nature of ignorance. Why is it, if one is the Buddha, that one is not aware of that fact? What is the power of ignorance that obscures emptiness by attachment to form? According to the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, ignorance (*wu-ming*) is an extrinsic defilement that covers or obscures the permanent, pure reality of suchness. Ignorance is not itself permanent; it is empty, i.e., dependently originated. For that reason it can be eliminated or removed to reveal the purity of suchness, which it obscures. Since ignorance and defilement

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[154] T. 45, p. 636ab.

[155] T. 44, p. 253a.

are extrinsic, enlightenment can be seen as both possible and close at hand.

The *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine itself, however, gives no hints as to the origins of ignorance. But when that idea is correlated with the doctrine of the One Mind, an explanation is forthcoming. The defiling power that obscures pure, original awareness itself originates in the One Mind. Differentiated forms of consciousness are superimposed on the pure awareness of emptiness through a self-differentiation or self-negation of Mind itself. The One Mind becomes alienated from itself in the differentiated forms of conventional awareness or saṃsāra. But as the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine stipulates, the alienation does not obstruct the eternal purity of Mind that lies undefiled beneath the various forms of consciousness. The One Mind remains unified even in the appearance of differentiation.[156] As Fa-tsang claims, whether Mind is in opposition (*wei*) to itself or in compliance (*shun*), it remains eternally Unconditioned.[157]

The event of enlightenment is the event in which differentiated mind realizes its true identity as Mind. The One Mind returns to an awareness of itself in the occurrence of enlightenment, the occurrence in which empty forms become transparent to the unconditioned emptiness through which they are constituted. Both the differentiation of Mind and its return to its self-identity are

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[156] T. 44, pp. 252c-253a. [157] T. 35, p. 405c.

activities that are empowered by and derive from Mind itself.

If, as stated above, enlightenment is the free movement of the One Mind back to itself, then this must have definite implications for religious practice. If the cause and source of enlightenment is the arising (ch'i) of the tathāgatagarbha, the Buddha within, then what significance can be attributed to traditional Buddhist practice? It is certainly true that for Fa-tsang the individual himself is not responsible for enlightenment since individuality is itself the symptom of alienation. The power to realize the self-identity of Mind can arise only from Mind. Only the Buddha can be the source and cause of Buddhahood. For this reason, religious practice (hsing) is most adequately conceived of as the response to the arising of the Buddha-nature within. Practice does not create the Buddha-nature but witnesses to it.[158] For Fa-tsang, "practice arises from the unconditioned" (hsing tsung li ch'i).[159] Practice is not to be thought of as the means to the goal of enlightenment. On the contrary, it gives expression to the *a priori* presence of the Buddha-nature.

In the process of enlightenment the One Mind returns to and realizes itself, and this realization of identity is expressed in the perfection of religious practice. Practice then is not simply prior to and preparatory for the realization of enlightenment; practice is the very essence of enlightenment.[160] In

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[158] T. 45, p. 651b. [159] T. 45, p. 639c. [160] T. 35, p. 405b.

Buddhist practice, the Buddha gives expression to himself.

It is important to keep in mind at this point that the self-identity to which the One Mind returns is not an original or formless identity.[161] Mind returns to its self-identity through its differentiation. Emptiness is realized through the empty forms in which it expresses itself. This is simply to say that enlightenment is not the total obliteration of the forms of conventional awareness.[162] What is exhausted in the return to Mind or emptiness is any notion of autonomous form, and all possibility of attachment to form. Enlightenment is the full realization of interrelatedness, i.e., emptiness, a realization that requires the conjunction of identity and difference, emptiness and form.

Enlightenment is the elimination of all opposition and conflict between subject and object. The realization of identity in the One Mind is the realization that subject and object are not simply polar opposites but are essentially interrelated aspects of Mind in its self-identity. The enlightened "self" is the medium through which the One Mind realizes and expresses itself. In the unfolding of enlightenment, the individual "self" releases all attachment to individuality, and in so doing becomes aware of the Buddha, or the One Mind, as his true nature or self.[163]

It may clarify the tathāgatagarbha (ju-lai tsang) doctrine to raise the question as to whether or not that doctrine constitutes

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[161]T. 44, p. 253a. [162]T. 45, p. 637a. [163]T. 45, p. 640b.

a denial of the early Buddhist "no self" (anātman) position. A preliminary negative answer to this question can be given when the apparent intentions or functions of the two doctrines are examined. Both doctrines arise in a similar context, but as responses to different concerns. The anātman doctrine, in all periods of Buddhist thought, functioned to break down attachment and reified bases for attachment. By annihilating the concept of the self, one could release oneself from positive and negative attachments that emerge from the implications of that concept.

The tathāgatagarbha doctrine emerged in later Buddhist thought but presupposed or assumed its foundation in the anātman doctrine. The tathāgatagarbha is the innate potential in all human beings to realize "no self" (anātman). Its nature is "no nature" (i wu-hsing wei hsing).[164] The fruition of the tathāgatagarbha is the awareness of the emptiness of self and world. When the tathāgatagarbha arises (ch'i), the individual self is taken up into the unconditional self-identity of Mind, i.e., true emptiness—an identity to which one's conditioned identity is subordinated but not annihilated.[165] Therefore, the tathāgatagarbha doctrine assumes, but does not directly express, the anātman doctrine. The question to which it comes into being as a response is different. The tathāgatagarbha notion answers the question of how it is possible (for me,

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[164] T. 45, p. 631c.

[165] T. 45, p. 655b.

ātman) to realize anātman. It is possible because that capacity is intrinsically present in human existence due to the source of existence in emptiness or Mind itself.

One might also profitably ask what question or concern gave rise to the doctrine of the One Mind. An interpretation that seems to accord with that doctrine and its context is to understand the One Mind doctrine as a response to fundamental questions about the ultimate source of all existence. Is existence simply an illusion as many texts seem to imply? Are all phenomena (shih) that obstruct the realization of emptiness in the final analysis expressions of a negative or demonic reality? Is the world in which we live essentially negative or positive, demonic or divine? And, finally, will human existence eventuate in fulfillment of some sort or in a final negation?

There is a strong tendency in many of the Indian Buddhist texts imported to China to see the world as illusion, as a trap that requires escape. This is not an important theme in most Chinese thought, Buddhist or otherwise. The early Chinese Buddhists often misunderstood the Indian texts because, among other things, the Chinese tended simply to presuppose a more positive approach to existence in the world. Later Chinese Buddhist thinkers like Fa-tsang, relying on centuries of textual criticism and the interpretations of Indian missionaries, understood the negative

intentions of many of the doctrines[166] but found it possible and desirable to render a more positive, worldly, reinterpretation without completely doing violence to the texts being interpreted.

The One Mind doctrine (which finds it most influential interpretation in the Awakening of Faith, most likely a Chinese text) seems to be a clear-cut attempt to answer the above questions in a positive manner. Human existence and the world surrounding it are, in terms of the doctrine of the One Mind, expressions of Absolute, unconditioned reality. All particular phenomena not only obstruct the vision of the Buddha, but are also symbols of and pointers to the Buddha. Indeed, in the final analysis, everything *is* the Buddha. Human existence in the world universally eventuates in salvation and enlightenment. Not only does the One Mind become differentiated from itself, but it also inevitably returns to itself.

Fa-tsang's interpretation of the One Mind doctrine, then, can be seen as an attempt to counter the dualistic tendencies (between ignorance and enlightenment, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, man and Buddha, and so on) in both Indian and Chinese Buddhist thought. The evocation of faith in the "ultimate source," i.e., suchness, may well be the primary motive and impetus behind the doctrine.

[166] T. 45, p. 502c.

# IV

# PARADOX IN THE THOUGHT OF FA-TSANG

## Definitions and Three Types of Paradox

In its most general and etymological meaning, paradox is that which is contrary to all expectations. It is something that is literally "against the opinion" of conventional thought The startling or shocking character of paradoxical assertions derives from their opposition to what one conventionally expects in an assertion based on one's previous experience of existence.

But more specifically, paradox denotes a unity of two opposing elements that in conventional experience cannot be united. When two opposites that contradict each other are held together in unity, a paradoxical statement results. For instance, it is logically contradictory and paradoxical to assert that two different and opposing elements are, nevertheless, identical. If, given the opposition between X and Y, one asserts that X is identical to Y, a paradoxical assertion has been made in the implicit claim that X is identical to that which is not X, i.e., Y. Y does not annul X in its opposition to it, but rather a unity between the two opposites is expressed. An example from Fa-tsang's texts is the claim that "form is emptiness," where emptiness means the

nonexistence of form.[1] Here, both identity and difference are held together in a unity that gives rise to a paradoxical statement.

Although paradoxical assertions violate the logical principle of noncontradiction,[2] they also presuppose and rely on that logical rule. The principle of noncontradiction is presupposed in that it constitutes the expectation or opinion against which a paradoxical assertion is made. The rule of noncontradiction is essential to the structure of logic or reason and is therefore the basis on which a paradoxical assertion can be constructed.

Paradox is a variety of contradiction, but not all contradictions are paradox. Some forms of contradiction are simply nonsense.[3] A paradox is a contradiction that derives not merely from the finitude of the subject or the fallibility of the thinking mind. Paradox involves a contradiction that emerges between the subject or thought and the objective reality that is given to thought. In this case it is apparent that "paradox is that type of contradiction which is ultimately neither avoidable nor soluble."[4]

[1]T. 33, p. 553a.

[2]The principle that it is logically impossible for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time and in the same sense, that contradictory attributes cannot coexist in and may not be affirmed of the same object, and that the same proposition cannot be both true and false.

[3]This discussion is based on Robert P. Scharlemann, manuscript of class lectures from "Theological Questions I," 1978 (transcribed from tapes by David E. Klemm), p. 281.

[4]Ibid.

In his Hua-yen fa p'u-t'i hsin chang, Fa-tsang describes a paradoxical situation as one in which "meanings are together in mutual opposition" (i chi hsiang-wei).[5] This opposition is also symbolically expressed by the union of two characters, mao and tun, the literal meaning of which is spear and shield.[6] The compound mao tun, which in Chinese denotes a paradoxical contradiction, originally derived its meaning from the story of an armourer who boasted that his spears would penetrate any shield, while his shields would repel any weapon.[7]

In this particular text, Fa-tsang employs the mao tun compound as well as the character wei, contradiction, to point out the paradoxical nature of his own assertions. In this and other texts of Fa-tsang,[8] no attempt is made to avoid, to solve, or to eliminate paradoxical assertions and conclusions. Rather than covering over paradoxical elements in his texts, or offering a rational solution for paradox, Fa-tsang brings them into the view of the reader as one of the most prominent and visible aspects of his writings. Indeed, Fa-tsang's texts consistently and systematically employ paradox as a fundamental and necessary element in the system of thought.

[5] T. 45, p. 653a.

[6] T. 45, p. 653a.

[7] Herbert A. Giles, A Chinese English Dictionary (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Co., 1972), p. 956.

[8] Although paradoxical statements are present in all of Fa-tsang's works, it seems to be a somewhat more prominent element in his shorter meditative works like the Hua-yen i-hai pai-mên than in his longer more discursive texts.

The following paradoxical assertions extracted from several texts will serve as examples of the types of paradox with which we are dealing.

> When one understands that causes are not causes, then it is called completion through causes.[9]

> In each and every hair [of the golden lion] there are unlimited lions.[10]

> One ought to know that permanence is identical to impermanence, and impermanence is identical to permanence.[11]

> Form is identical to nonform, and nonform is identical to form.[12]

> Nonemptiness is not different from emptiness.[13]

The startling, paradoxical nature of these assertions gives rise to various questions. The most basic questions that have guided the formulation of the final chapter of this dissertation are the following. What structures of thought in Fa-tsang's texts are fundamental to and decisive in the formulation of religious paradox? How or in what way do paradoxical assertions arise from those structures of thought? What is the relation between emptiness and paradox in the thought of Fa-tsang? What is the significance of paradoxical assertions like the above examples and how do they function within Fa-tsang's system of thought as a whole? Or, more generally, what interpretation of paradox in the thought of Fa-tsang

[9] T. 45, p. 627c. [10] T. 45, p. 665c. [11] T. 45, p. 634b.

[12] T. 45, p. 627c. [13] T. 44, p. 254b.

is most appropriate to that system of thought and to the texts in which it is formulated?

In Fa-tsang's texts, paradox is vividly and systematically displayed to the reader. However, in no place do the texts discuss paradox as such, nor do they make reference to the significance of paradoxical assertions. The purpose of this chapter is to make explicit what remains implicit in the texts by rendering an interpretation of paradox in the thought of Fa-tsang. This interpretation will be based on an analysis of the nature of paradox and its context in the writings of Fa-tsang. The analysis will first isolate three basic types of paradox in the texts under consideration, and then relate each of those types to the structures of thought within which they are formulated.

All three types of paradox originate in the tension between the two truths, that is, between conventional truth (saṃvṛti-satya/su-t'i), which is based on expectations issuing from existence in saṃsāra, and ultimate truth (paramārtha satya/chên-t'i), which is a mode of being in the world that is open to unconditioned emptiness beyond and within the various forms of existence. The concept/symbol emptiness is fundamental to all three types. However, each type derives from emptiness in a different way and in relation to different structures of thought; consequently, each varies from the others in character. The three types of paradox found in the texts of Fa-tsang can be briefly identified as follows.

The first type of paradox is modeled after paradoxical assertions in the Prajñāpāramita sūtras and other Mahāyāna texts that work with the concept emptiness. Beginning with the assertion that a phenomenon, X, is empty (i.e., since X originates dependently, it is empty of own-being), one moves to the further paradoxical implication that X is not X. For example, the following assertion is made in the Hua-yen i-hai pai-mên: "When one understands that origination is without self-nature, then there is no origination."[14]

The second variation of paradox is derived from Fa-tsang's interpretation of "true emptiness" and the dialectic of the One Mind in the Awakening of Faith. Whereas the first paradox asserts that all phenomenal forms are conditioned and empty, the second makes the paradoxical claim that any empty form is an expression of unconditioned emptiness, and can therefore be symbolic of that ultimate truth. To illustrate this, Fa-tsang makes the following paradoxical assertion. "When the great wisdom of perfect clarity gazes upon a minute hair, the universal sea of nature, the true source, is clearly manifest."[15]

The third type of paradox arises from the doctrine of the "nonobstruction of all phenomena" (shih shih wu-ai), which was discussed in Chapter III as the cosmological articulation of emptiness. When one comes into view of the ultimate truth of emptiness, each phenomenal form is paradoxically perceived as interpenetrating with

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[14] T. 45, p. 627c.

[15] T. 45, p. 638a.

and containing all others. A famous example of this paradox is contained in the Essay on the Golden Lion:

> In each and every hair [of the lion] there is the golden lion. All of the lions contained in each and every hair simultaneously and suddenly penetrate into one hair. [Therefore,] within each and every hair there are unlimited lions.[16]

Each of these three types of paradox will be examined in greater detail.

The first type of paradox found in Fa-tsang's texts has a similar structure to that found in the earliest Indian Mahāyāna texts, the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras, and is undoubtedly influenced by them. In the Prajñā sūtras, which first promulgated the Mahāyāna teachings on emptiness, the opposition and tension are between that which one conventionally affirms (i.e., the existence of phenomenal form) and statements issuing from the realization of the ultimate truth of emptiness. The existence of form is contradicted by the awareness of emptiness. The bodhisattva "cognizes all dharmas as empty of own-being, and sees them as not really existing, not totally real, uncreated."[17] All the dharmas (i.e., fundamental forms of experience) that one conventionally apprehended by means of their constitutive characteristics or marks are, from the perspective of ultimate truth, "with one mark only, i.e., with no mark."[18]

[16]T. 45, p. 665c.

[17]Edward Conze, Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 533.

[18]Ibid., p. 195.

The apparent existence of X is contradicted by the emptiness of X, where emptiness is its nonexistence in ultimate reality. X (conventionally perceived) is not X (ultimately not perceived). The opposition between the two truths, or two modes of awareness, is final. What exists from one perspective does not exist from the other.

> It is therefore on account of what is dharmically a concept due to worldly convention that the Bodhisattva fully knows the supreme enlightenment. But in ultimate reality there is not anything that is form, etc. to: enlightenment, and there is no one who courses in enlightenment. All these dharmas have been conceived on account of convention, and not by way of ultimate reality. And in consequence that Bodhisattva who, from the first thought of enlightenment onwards, courses toward enlightenment does not apprehend those thoughts, as well as no beings or enlightenment, no Buddha or Bodhisattva.[19]

Although in terms of the general definition of paradox (that which is against the opinion of conventional experience), these assertions do qualify as paradox; in terms of the more specific definition (the unity of opposites) they are not in a strict sense paradoxical. They are expressed in the form of a rhetorical or aesthetic paradox, but they are finally resolvable in the awareness of emptiness. What is involved here is a movement from one mode of awareness to another mode rather than a unity of both. One element in the opposition negates the other; emptiness is the contradiction of form. Although form initially obstructs the presence of emptiness, once emptiness is perceived one no longer

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[19] Ibid., p. 606.

perceives form, nor can form reassert itself against emptiness. The implication is that the awareness of illusory form is terminated in the realization of transcendental emptiness.

However, there are instances in the Prajñā sūtras where a complete unity of opposites is expressed, and it is these instances that have predominantly caught the attention of Fa-tsang. Specifically, Fa-tsang has focused on one well-known verse in the Heart sūtra and has interpreted the other Prajñā sūtras from the perspective. The Heart sūtra asserts, paradoxically, that "Form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form; emptiness does not differ from form, form does not differ from emptiness; whatever is form, that is emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form."[20]

This is the paradox of the full unity of identity and difference. The two elements are complete opposites. Form is the negation of emptiness, emptiness is the negation of form, yet what is expressed here is their unity and identity. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form, which is to say that form is not form (i.e., emptiness), and emptiness is not emptiness (i.e., form).

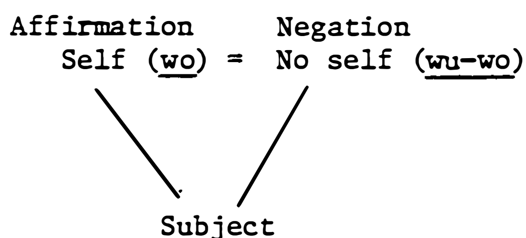
Fa-tsang's commentary on the Heart sūtra takes this verse as its central element and discusses its meaning at great length.[21] What is emphasized is Fa-tsang's understanding of "true emptiness" (chên-k'ung), which is not transcendent to and destructive of form.

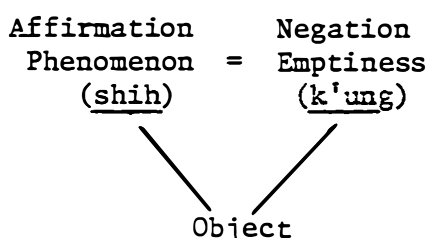
[20]Conze, Buddhist Wisdom Books, p. 81.

[21]T. 33, p. 553ab.

"Since emptiness is true emptiness, it certainly does not obstruct illusory form. If it does obstruct form, then this is nihilistic emptiness, and not true emptiness."[22] True emptiness expresses the simultaneous and paradoxical identity of form and emptiness.

The same paradoxical relation is maintained on both sides of the subject/object polarity.




Just as unity is maintained objectively between phenomenal forms and emptiness, a paradoxical unity is established in true emptiness between the individual self and the negation of all individual self-nature. Although individuality is taken up into the universality of the Buddha-nature (fo-hsing), individuality itself is not annihilated but rather is fulfilled. Just as the realization of true emptiness is not the experience of absolute formlessness, so the realization of no-self does not destroy personal existence.

This first type of paradox is instantiated in all of Fa-tsang's texts and in terms of various distinct content. The basic form employed is a full affirmation followed by a full negation, but in such a way that a unity of affirmation and negation is maintained

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[22] T. 33, p. 553ab.

rather than a contradiction of one by the other. The following verses exemplify this type of paradox.

> Although there is two yet there is not two. Non-duality is identical with duality. This is the dharmadhātu [fa-chieh].[23]

> At the time of origination, there is no origination.[24]

> Since form is without substance or nature, dharmas then, are established. Because dharmas constitute the basis of lack of form, therefore they do not lose their dharma form. Form is simultaneously non-form, and non-form is simultaneously form. As to form and non-form, it is the case that there is really no difference.[25]

There is one theme in the Prajñā sūtras in which this type of paradox is well developed; this theme is the skillful means (upāyakauśalya) of the bodhisattva. Upāya is the capacity to reside at the intersection of affirmation and negation, holding the two opposites in unity. Although the bodhisattva realizes that there is no form, he continually dwells in the world of form. In the experience of the bodhisattva, emptiness and compassion do not obstruct each other. While realizing the emptiness of the forms "human being" and "salvation," he simultaneously vows to save all human beings.

Fa-tsang has enthusiastically adopted this theme from the sūtras and has incorporated it into his understanding of true emptiness. True emptiness is the paradoxical awareness that two complete opposites, form and emptiness, or affirmation and negation, are completely identical. This unity is actualized in the life

[23] T. 45, p. 627b. [24] T. 45, p. 669a. [25] T. 45, p. 627c.

of the bodhisattva. "One who has wisdom and upāya realizes that there is no wisdom and upāya."[26]

The second type of paradoxical statement found in the texts of Fa-tsang originates in the awareness that the ultimate ground of all existing phenomena has become manifest and entered existence through a finite, conditioned form. This experience is paradoxical in both senses of the word. The presence of unconditioned reality in a particular, conditioned form contradicts all expectations based on conventional existential experience. Even though the habituation to conventional truth and the differentiation of phenomenal reality is the cause and the nature of saṃsāra and illusion, nevertheless, the ultimate truth of emptiness becomes manifest in and through that same conventional truth. And the reason why this experience contradicts all expectations that originate in conventional truth is that the unity of opposites has been expressed in a final way. The assertion is paradoxical in a strict sense in that it unites conditioned existence with unconditioned suchness that, by definition, transcends both conditions and existence.

The following examples from various texts illustrate the manner in which this type of paradox is expressed.

> By means of an insignificant object, one gazes at the dharmakāya.[27]

> Gazing upon a minute hair, the universal sea of nature (hsing), the true source, is clearly manifest.[28]

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[26]T. 45, p. 634c. [27]T. 45, p. 629a. [28]T. 45, p. 638a.

And drawing on an image from the Hua-yen sūtra, Fa-tsang claims that

> in each atom are countless Buddhas preaching the dharma.[29]

Each example stresses the insignificant, empty nature of the medium through which ultimate truth becomes manifest and, by emphasizing that, intensifies the opposition between the two poles of the paradox. In spite of the dependent, conditioned nature of phenomenal existence, it is the locus for the disclosure of independent, unconditional reality.

This emphasis in Fa-tsang's texts in some sense is in opposition to, but more accurately is an extension of, what is emphasized in the Prajñā sūtras. In those sūtras the focus of attention is on the way in which ultimate truth or reality transcends conventional reality. Paraphrasing the religious message in the Prajñā sūtras, one might say that "the conventional truth and reality that you are unconsciously affirming is ultimately illusory and binding. Ultimate truth is infinitely beyond all conventional phenomenal reality which is negated in emptiness."

Fa-tsang's paradoxical assertion accepts and then reverses that claim. Paraphrasing Fa-tsang, one might say that "the empty reality which you are negating is, by means of that negation, affirmed as the medium through which ultimate truth enters existence.

[29] T. 45, p. 506a.

Although fully transcendent to phenomena, ultimate truth or reality is apprehended and known only through its immanence in phenomena." Fa-tsang's paradoxical language, which unites negation and affirmation, can be interpreted as a reaction to the predominantly negative language of certain Mahāyāna texts.[30]

All of Fa-tsang's assertions about the manifestation or break-through of unconditional emptiness or suchness are formulated in paradoxical language. An interpretation of those assertions must ask why that is so. Why are statements about ultimate truth and unconditional reality expressed in contradictory terms rather than directly and logically? Our initial answer to this question hinges on an understanding of the nature of the human consciousness that apprehends ultimate truth, as well as the nature of the truth that is revealed, and the relation between them.

According to Fa-tsang's analysis, the consciousness that seeks ultimate truth and to which ultimate truth is revealed is structured to operate in terms of the basic opposition between subject (<u>nêng</u>) and object (<u>so</u>). Subjective consciousness objectifies that with which it deals, that is, consciousness deals with everything as an object over against itself as subject. Furthermore, consciousness not only objectifies but also differentiates the objective into

[30] In fact, Fa-tsang contrasts his own position to that of Nāgārjuna in asserting that his methods are predominantly affirmative while Nāgārjuna's are negative. T. 45, p. 502c.

discrete and autonomous entities, each of which is grasped in terms of its distinct form. Human beings have conscious access to reality only through the distinct and graspable forms of awareness that are given in language. But in employing the conditioned forms of consciousness in thinking and knowing, consciousness conditions what is known. That which is known, reality, is conditioned or limited in terms of being objective rather than subjective, and in terms of having a single, distinct form rather than another.

Suchness (chên-ju) and emptiness (k'ung) are two names for the reality that is revealed (hsien) to consciousness in sudden realization (tun-chüeh); both indicate that this reality is not conditioned by any positive, graspable content. It is "such as it is," which is empty of all graspable form. Suchness is not conditioned by a particular form that can be compared or likened to other forms. It is unconditioned (wu-wei) and fully transcendent to conditioned reality. Suchness is not an object among other objects, nor is it a divine subject in addition to all other subjects. It is neither subjective nor objective, but the source and ground of every subject/object relation.

Thus there is a definite hiatus or discontinuity between the conditioned, knowing consciousness and the unconditioned reality that is given to consciousness to know. Human consciousness grasps only conditioned forms; suchness, which is what consciousness attempts to grasp, is unconditioned and has no distinct form. All efforts to grasp or to refer to suchness condition and objectify

it by implying its objectivity and possession of a distinct form. Statements about suchness are paradoxical because in attempting to express it, they violate it by making it what it is not.

Whereas suchness precedes the subject/object split, any statement about it (like this one) implies that split because the subject/object dichotomy is presupposed in the structure of language. For this reason no assertion about unconditioned suchness is direct and unreservedly true. Therefore, in Fa-tsang's texts, any attempt to bring unconditioned emptiness into the conditioned forms of language yields paradoxical assertions. By paradoxically uniting affirmative and negative elements in any reference to unconditioned reality, Fa-tsang maintains the awareness of human inability to make that reference directly.

Aside from the fact that language, which operates in terms of the conditioned forms of consciousness, cannot make direct reference to ultimate reality, the paradoxical nature of assertions about the unconditioned has another basis. Not only are human statements about suchness paradoxical, but the way in which this unconditioned reality makes its appearance is also paradoxical. The paradox lies not simply in the thinking subject, but in the way suchness becomes manifest to the subject. The unconditioned reality of suchness becomes known to humans only through conditioned forms, a paradoxical manifestation. This is also to say that the only way to realize ultimate truth (chên-t'i) is through conventional truth (su-t'i), that is, ultimate truth is paradoxically realized.

The revealing of suchness through one conditioned object of experience is the most fundamental paradox in the texts of Fa-tsang. Although form is subjected to the critique of the concept emptiness, it is possible that by means of one empty form, unconditioned emptiness may become present to experience.

In one text Fa-tsang refers to this symbolic capacity in forms as the "illuminating cause" (liao-yin) of suchness.[31] There it is written that essence (t'i), i.e., emptiness/suchness, "is not that which originates in originating causes; it is simply that which is illuminated by illuminating causes."[32] One particular, conditioned form can be the cause for the illumination of ultimate truth. In principle, any form of experience can become symbolic of emptiness.

The experience of the actualization of the symbolic potential in an object is the experience of the sudden breakthrough of emptiness. In an ecstatic experience the rigid differentiation between subject and object is broken down along with the reified distinction between all forms of experience. In true emptiness, the connection between and the interrelation of all forms are revealed without annihilating either subjective or objective form. Both subject and object are paradoxically negated and affirmed in an experience that illuminates reality in its suchness.

In this experience a particular form or object of experience is the medium for the manifestation of ultimate truth. Suchness,

[31] T. 45, p. 673b. [32] T. 45, p. 637b.

which is otherwise concealed (yin) from experience, makes its appearance through that object. However, the object that is symbolic of emptiness is experienced in a contradictory manner.[33] The object presents itself as the existence of ultimate truth, yet simultaneously it denies or negates its own ultimacy. A corresponding contradiction is present in the subject who experiences the symbol. Subjectively, the symbolic form is experienced as the existence of the unconditioned, yet at the same time one can judge that the object itself is empty and not the unconditional truth. Ultimate truth makes its appearance and is received in the form of a contradiction in which both affirmation and negation are simultaneously united.

The contradiction cannot be resolved or eliminated but is essential to the experience of unconditioned emptiness. If no object becomes symbolic, then suchness is nowhere within existence to be experienced. And if one object (symbol, concept, and so on) is taken to be the ultimate truth in itself, then that act of grasping or attachment is itself sufficient to deny the presence of ultimate truth since the manifestation of emptiness is what enables the elimination of all such attachment.

A symbol for emptiness is the existence of emptiness for human experience. Emptiness enters existence only in form. However, in

[33]For this aspect of the discussion of religious symbols I am directly indebted to Scharlemann, "Theological Questions I," pp. 251-52.

the immediacy of sudden breakthrough, symbolic form negates itself in order to point beyond itself to the ultimate truth that it symbolizes. Any form symbolizing emptiness shows itself as being empty. The form itself is important since emptiness enters existence only there, but its true significance is not itself but rather its referent—that emptiness to which it refers. The object is affirmed as the medium for the ultimate truth of emptiness and as a participant in emptiness, but it is also simultaneously negated in view of its referent. The object itself is conditioned and empty. It is not itself ultimate truth but rather the place at which ultimate truth can be seen.

In Fa-tsang's system, the symbol "emptiness" (both k'ung and li) is the norm or standard in terms of which all other symbols are judged. Other symbols are efficacious, and hence truly symbolic, only to the extent that they reflect the character of this symbol. The symbol emptiness is the one symbol that refers to all symbols and all forms by denying their ultimate truth. Emptiness symbolizes the relativity of symbols as such. It is the norm for all symbols because it not only denies the ultimacy of all other symbols, but in addition it reflexively points back to itself in self-denial. In its self-negation, the symbol emptiness denies its own ultimacy (svabhāva) as a symbol, and precisely in that activity refers beyond itself to the ultimate truth of emptiness.[34] In the

[34]The discussion of self-negation in religious symbols is based upon Scharlemann, "Theological Questions I" p. 231; and Robert P.

self-denial of the symbol, its referent may be elicited.

The structure of the symbol emptiness is inherently paradoxical; it is a negation that is also simultaneously an affirmation. The ultimate truth of emptiness becomes manifest only to the extent that the symbol in which it becomes manifest negates itself. True emptiness is affirmatively revealed in the negation of emptiness.

When, in his commentary on the Heart sūtra, Fa-tsang says "One cannot grasp emptiness by means of emptiness," he is repeating the denial that is contained in the symbol itself and is referring to its paradoxical character.[35] Emptiness (the concept/symbol) is not emptiness (the referent, i.e., ultimate truth). To grasp emptiness (the symbol) is to conceal emptiness (the referent). The danger of grasping the symbol in such a way that its referent is obscured is present, of course, but minimized by the inherent self-negation of the symbol emptiness. For this reason emptiness is the one form that stands as the norm for the symbolic, revealing potential in all forms.

Given the fact that Fa-tsang's texts assert that form is potentially symbolic of emptiness, it remains to be asked on what basis that could be so. How is it possible that a conditioned object can mediate the ultimate truth of suchness to human awareness?

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Scharlemann, Reflection and Doubt in the Thought of Paul Tillich (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 177-81.

[35] T. 33, p. 553a.

What understanding of the relation between the two gives rise to the possibility of the manifestation of emptiness in form?

The theoretical basis in Fa-tsang's texts for the capacity of conditioned form to symbolize and mediate an awareness of unconditioned emptiness is the identity between form and emptiness. There is no final separation between the two.

> Illuminating emptiness, it is not different from nonemptiness.[36]

> Nonemptiness is not different from emptiness.[37]

Emptiness is fully immanent in form so that ultimately no dualism remains. It is not the case that there are two realms or worlds, one absolute and unconditioned, the other finite and conditioned.

However, the identity between form and emptiness is not a purely logical identity that excludes all difference. Here, the identity of that which is different, form and emptiness, is expressed as an identity in unity with difference. The awareness of the identity of form and emptiness is an awareness of a dialectical identity to which one arrives through a process of double negation. In this process the initial negation of one polar element by the other (i.e., original identity is negated by differentiation) is itself negated. The final negation does not simply reestablish the original identity, but rather a new, dialectical identity that includes the movement to and through differentiation. The final negation is ultimately

[36] T. 44, p. 254a.

[37] T. 44, p. 254b.

an affirmation of both elements in a dialectical identity that unites both identity and difference.

This relationship between form and emptiness can be more concretely described with reference to the doctrine of the One Mind, which is the basis and inspiration for this aspect of Fa-tsang's thought. It will be recalled that the One Mind in its original identity moves out from itself in self-negation. This self-negation is the differentiation of the One Mind from itself, which creates the awareness of difference and separateness. Individual selves (wo/ātman) become aware of their own autonomy and independence (tzŭ-hsing/svabhāva), as well as of the independence of separate objects in the world. This movement of the One Mind is the initial negation in the dialectical process. The awareness of autonomous form negates the original identity of Mind. The conditioned reality of saṃsāra *is* the unconditioned One Mind differentiated from itself, but in this initial negation, individual minds remain unaware of this identity. Their self-understanding is one of alienation from their original source, a dualism between conditioned existence and unconditioned Mind.

In the actualization of enlightenment, the One Mind returns to this self-identity through its separation from itself in differentiated form. Difference or form, which is constituted by an initial negation of identity, is itself negated in a double or dialectical negation. Fa-tsang describes the second negation as a "return to the source" (kuei-yüan). However, in the experience

of enlightenment described previously as "true emptiness," differentiated form is not totally annihilated. On the contrary, difference is affirmed in its identity with the One Mind. Absolute difference, however, the full autonomy and independence of form, is negated, so that difference is relative difference. Even though each differentiated form or self is particular and unique, all are empty of self-nature and exist only within a complex web of conditions and relations. In other words, form has its existence only through its source or ground in emptiness, i.e., interrelatedness. The self-negation of primal emptiness, the One Mind, is the creative source of all differentiated form. The experience of enlightenment illuminates this identity without destroying the initial creative movement into differentiation. But the absolute quality of difference is relativized; difference is relative to identity.

The understanding that difference presupposes identity, that negation presupposes an original affirmation that necessarily remains the basis of negation, can be found articulated in various ways in almost all of Fa-tsang's texts. In his T'an hsüan chi, in response to a question posed to himself, Fa-tsang asks whether the difference between ignorance and truth is not really a final separation.

> Answer: Because it opposes the true [i.e., emptiness, Mind], it does not obtain separation from the true. . .Because the impure is not separate from the true essence, therefore

> we say that the common people are identical with suchness.[38]

This unity, the simultaneous conjunction of identity and difference or emptiness and form, is realized in the sudden breakthrough of ultimate truth, or the dialectical movement of the One Mind returning to itself through self-differentiation.

This same relationship between emptiness and form can be seen to obtain between the polar opposites, permanence and impermanence, static and dynamic reality. It is commonly understood that the Buddhist position is one of impermanence (anitya) as opposed to one of permanence (e.g., the permanent ātman/Brahman of the Upaniṣads). But in the case of Fa-tsang, this question is somewhat more complicated.

> What arises constantly does not arise, and nonarising constantly arises. On this basis nonarising is identical with arising.[39]

> As to permanence, it does not conflict with dependent origination. Permanence is not different from impermanence. Moreover, since the essence of impermanence is quiescent, then impermanence is not different from permanence. If one discards impermanence then the meaning of permanence is also lost. If one discards permanence then the meaning of impermanence is also lost. One ought to know that permanence is identical with impermanence, and impermanence is identical with permanence.[40]

According to Fa-tsang's texts, reality or suchness is dynamic and impermanent, but it is dynamic in such a way that its permanent, unconditioned nature is not contradicted. An ultimate unity obtains

[38] T. 35, p. 405c.

[39] T. 45, p. 632b.

[40] T. 45, p. 634b.

between the static absoluteness of the One Mind, and its dynamic movement.

> It is not the case that true essence (i.e., suchness) cuts off the dharmas of origination and cessation. They have no self-nature, therefore they are not different from suchness. They don't have to be cut off.[41]

There is no conflict between the dynamic origination and cessation of conditioned reality and the unconditioned, unmoved nature of Mind or suchness.

> As to the phrase "not one and not different," it means that the true Mind is in complete motion. Mind and saṃsāra are not different, yet it constantly does not change its true nature.[42]

The "true nature" (chên-hsing) of Mind, which is permanent and eternal, includes continual self-negation and differentiation from itself. Suchness is permanently dynamic, uniting conditioned and unconditioned elements in its true nature.

> When the holy teachings say that suchness is immutable and eternal, what they mean is that when it obeys conditions and becomes pure and impure dharmas, it eternally becomes impure and pure, but it does not lose its own essence. In this case, the eternal which is not different from the noneternal is called "inconceivable permanence." It does not mean immutability in the common sense of the word.[43]

Suchness is permanently in motion, differentiating itself from itself in human experience of saṃsāra and returning to itself in

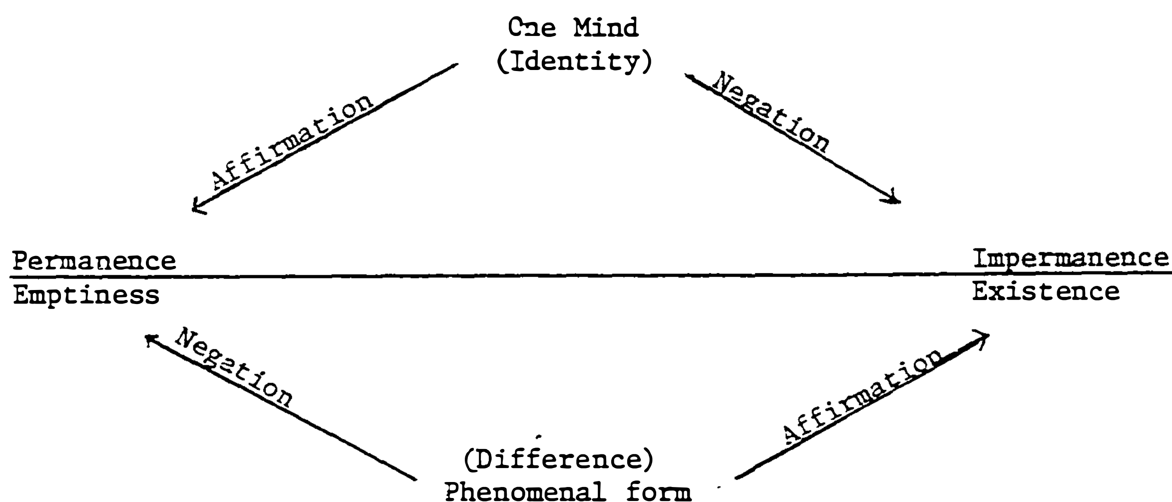
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[41]T. 44, p. 253a. [42]T. 44, p. 254c.

[43]T. 45, p. 500a, quoted from Cook, Treatise on the Five Doctrines, p. 423.

enlightenment. The return (<u>kuei</u>) to identity or permanence is a dialectical return that does not destroy impermanent, dependently originating existence. On the contrary, in the breakthrough of true emptiness one sees conditioned reality truly for the first time. One of Fa-tsang's favorite images illustrates this unity of opposites in suchness. The mirror appears to continually move in response to the movements before it. The images that it reflects are in constant motion. Yet the mirror itself is unmoved, remaining in a pure, permanent, reflective state.

The foregoing discussion has shown that reality, as presented in the texts of Fa-tsang, is composed of two separate aspects, unconitioned emptiness and conditioned form. But rather than presenting a final dualism in reality, Fa-tsang has shown that there are unconditioned and conditioned elements in both aspects of reality that correspond to each other in such a way that the ultimate unity of reality is illuminated. The following diagram shows that correspondence:



The two sides of the One Mind (upper half of the diagram) are (1) its eternal, unconditioned state which involves permanent self-affirmation, and (2) its self-negation or differentiation from itself in which the One Mind creates impermanent, conditioned phenomena. The two sides of phenomenal form (lower half of the diagram) are (1) its affirmative existence in conventional experience, and (2) its nonexistence or negation in emptiness.

The key to the correspondence between the two sides is the principle (li) of dependent origination (yüan-ch'i). This is the case because, as has been shown throughout this dissertation, there are "two meanings of dependent origination, emptiness and existence."[44]

The existence of any phenomenal form originates dependent on a multitude of conditions beyond that form; and since that existence is conditioned and dependent, it is empty, which ultimately leads to thoroughgoing interrelatedness or emptiness.

The self-negation of the One Mind in impermanent, conditioned reality corresponds to the affirmative existence of phenomenal form (right half of the diagram). But, in addition, the dependent, conditioned existence of form is the constant negation of all form in emptiness, which corresponds to the eternal self-affirmation of the One Mind in its permanence (left half of the diagram). The two aspects of reality are united in the existential realization that existence is empty existence, and that impermanence is the permanent truth of reality.

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[44] T. 35, p. 405b.

On the basis of this discussion it is now possible to return to our original question: How is it theoretically possible for a conditioned object or form to be symbolic of, or to mediate, the unconditioned truth of emptiness? That possibility can be seen in the fact that the conditioned existence of form is grounded in and constituted by unconditioned Mind or emptiness. Form is the self-negation of unconditioned emptiness. In a dialectical negation of that initial negation, which may be elicited through various practical techniques, true emptiness, i.e., enlightenment, breaks through conditioned form.

From another perspective, one can see that the impermanent, conditioned existence of form is precisely its emptiness. Any empty form is innately capable of symbolically pointing to the ultimate truth of emptiness.

> As to arising, even if it engages conditions, conditions certainly have no nature. The principle [li] of "no-nature" is revealed in the existence of conditions.[45]

Again, for Fa-tsang, the key meditative technique involves the principle of dependent origination. If one thoroughly contemplates the fact that all forms of existence originate dependent on all other forms of existence, then one begins to shift the focus of attention from the autonomous presence of forms to what lies between forms, from their static existence to their dynamic relations. To begin to shift one's view from the forms themselves to what connects

[45] T. 35, p. 405b.

and grounds them in their interrelations is to set up the possibility for the breakthrough of ultimate truth. The manifestation of emptiness cannot be predicted or determined, but it can be prepared for by the attempt to understand the locus of its manifestation, i.e., form, in terms of the doctrines of emptiness and dependent origination. Symbols for unconditioned emptiness are not created in human thought; the One Mind is the source of their symbolic power. However, it is possible to look in the right direction and in the right way, and Fa-tsang's thought may be understood as an articulation of these methods.

Since each empty form participates in emptiness, it can also point to unconditioned emptiness. Forms are potentially symbolic of suchness on the basis of their identity with emptiness, but they can also be self-asserting and alienating on the basis of their difference from emptiness. The same reality may be perceived in terms of either of two modes of awareness. The conventional mode perceives only differentiated form and thus engenders alienation and suffering; the enlightened mode of awareness sees through differentiated form to true emptiness, thus engendering wisdom and compassion.

The third and final variation of paradox to be found in the texts of Fa-tsang originates as an extension of the previous type; it arises subsequent to the sudden manifestation of unconditioned emptiness through conditioned, symbolic form. This paradox concerns the nature of phenomenal reality in view of the manifestation of

ultimate truth. But it is expressed not as the relation between conditioned form and unconditioned emptiness, but rather as the nature of and relation between forms themselves. This involves paradoxical descriptions of the true mode of being of all conditioned reality, both subjective and objective.

The enlightened view of phenomenal reality was expressed in descriptive language in Chapter II, section 2, as the dependently originating dharmadhātu (yüan-ch'i fa-chieh). But when Fa-tsang addresses the question of the nature of phenomenal form in view of the ultimate truth of true emptiness, he inevitably employs paradoxical language. The following examples illustrate this type of paradox.

> One object is eternally able to include all others.[46]

> As to illuminating the unthinkable, this refers to the fact that although one does not destroy an object's small capacity, yet it penetrates everywhere in the ten directions, and is revealed as universally including everything in its midst. This is because measure is nonmeasure, and lack of capacity is capacity.[47]

> All the organs of the lion as well as the tip of each and every hair, all, by means of the gold, include the lion exhaustively. All of the organs and all of the hairs individually include the entire substance. Each and every one fully penetrates the lions eye. The eye is identical with the ear. The ear is the nose, the nose is the tongue, the tongue is the body. All organs are mutually identified. . .They are freely established without hindrance or obstruction.[48]

In the language of each of these examples, temporal and spatial

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[46]T. 45, p. 633c. [47]T. 45, p. 629b. [48]T. 45, p. 665b.

categories have been transcended. The limits of time and space are simultaneously present (wan-jan) and exhausted (chin). The awareness of suchness paradoxically includes all polarities that in conventional awareness cannot be united because of the tension and obstruction between them. In ultimate truth, all oppositions are united without obstruction (wu-ai). This is possible on the basis of thoroughgoing emptiness because in "emptiness" no form has a self-nature (tzŭ-hsing) that is independent and autonomous. All forms are continually involved in the dynamic process of dependent origination. The existence of each form is a changing, relative existence that unites each phenomenon with all others.

The examples of paradox cited above all contradict the spatial restrictions given in conventional truth. Every entity, in spite of its size or spatial capacity, is said to contain and include all other entities. A speck of dust contains an enormous mountain without obstructing the conventional nature of either; both continue to exist as they are (wan-jan). Both entities are empty of a permanent, timeless self-nature that unequivocally determines the boundary between them. In the infinite network of relativity, no final separation obtains between empty existents.

Like the category of space, time is also transcended in the manifestation of true emptiness.

> For instance, when perceiving an object, this is that which is manifested in one moment of mind. At the time that this one moment of mind is manifested, it is identical with one hundred thousand great kalpas. . . Since one instant is without substance, it penetrates

> the great *kalpas*. Since the great *kalpas* are without substance, they are contained in one instant.[49]

In the sudden breakthrough of suchness, eternity is manifest in time. The enlightened bodhisattva sees that the present includes the past and the future. Each of the three divisions of time--past, present, and future--interpenetrates with and contains the others. None of the three divisions have an autonomous self-nature but are thoroughly relative to each other. The reified, static conception of temporality given in conventional truth is not in accord with the awareness of true emptiness. From the bodhisattva's perspective, all assertions about time are paradoxical since time expresses the eternal.

The true nature (*hsing*) of dynamic, interrelating reality is "no nature" (*i wu-hsing wei hsing*).[50] The emptiness of form breaks down all rigid boundaries and exhausts all static attributes. In interrelated suchness there are no definite borders and limits; everything extends to include all else. The line of differentiation between one form and another is clear yet relativized. In ultimate truth the unity and identity of all existence is manifest without obstruction to multiplicity and difference. This is the perspective from which the *Hua-yen sūtra* claims that "all is one, and one is all."[51]

This final type of paradox derives from the violation of conventional categories and distinctions that takes place in the

[49]T. 45, p. 630c. [50]T. 45, p. 631c. [51]T. 45, p. 629c.

sudden awareness of emptiness. For the bodhisattva who has realized emptiness, spatio-temporal differentiations are not ultimate but empty, i.e., relative. This cosmological vision of the *dharmadhātu* without reified self-nature was known in the *Hua-yen* school as *shih-shih wu-ai* (the nonobstruction of all phenomena). This idea is vividly and paradoxically described in the imagery of the *Hua-yen sūtra* in terms of the interreflecting jewels on the "net of Indra," as well as in the bodhisattva Sudhana's experience of the "Tower of *Maitreya*." In both cases, the experience of true emptiness is described as one in which all aspects of reality simultaneously radiate the depth of reality by including and interpenetrating with all others. In that *sūtra*, the dependently originating *dharmadhātu* is the body of the Buddha *Vairocana,* the Sun Buddha, whose rays penetrate everywhere imparting life.

The identity of emptiness and form, Mind and its differentiation, expressed in the manifestation of true emptiness obviates the necessity to seek truth in a transcendental reality. Suchness is ultimately nondual. On this basis Fa-tsang directs one back to forms themselves, not to autonomous form but to form in interrelation and emptiness. In *Hua-yen* meditations like *shih-shih wu-ai*, one focuses on the truth immanent in reality. This affirmation and sanctification of temporal, conditioned existence is the primary contribution of Fa-tsang's thought.

This affirmative emphasis in Fa-tsang is carried out on the basis of and as an extension of the dialectical negation in the

Prajñāpāramitā sūtras and Mādhyamika śāstras. The awareness that every phenomenon is empty, i.e., conditioned and relativized by its dependence on other phenomena, is extended until it becomes the more affirmative awareness that every empty phenomenon conditions and relativizes all other phenomena and the whole of reality. On this basis every phenomenon can be seen to include all others and to participate fully in the ultimate foundation of all existence, emptiness. The positive dimension that Fa-tsang adds to the negative one is the source of his paradoxical assertions.

## The Significance of Paradox

Several initial suggestions concerning the significance of paradox can be made by inquiring further into the relation between paradox and conventional truth which involves language and reason, or logic. In the introduction to this chapter, it was stated that the rule of noncontradiction, as well as the entire structure of rationality and conventional truth, is necessary to the formation of paradox because it constitutes the basis of rationality on which paradoxical statements are made. The exact place of reason in Fa-tsang's thought can be clarified by reference to the dialectic of the One Mind. The One Mind eternally negates itself in the act of creating (tso) the realm of birth and death (shêng-ssŭ). The realm of birth and death, which is thus posited by unconditioned Mind, is the realm of differentiation, reason, and language, i.e., conventional truth (su-t'i). The primal identity of emptiness is

sublated in the origin of conventional, rational consciousness. In the self-differentiation of the One Mind, human existence is formed and constituted in its activity of rational discrimination. This activity is the basis of existential alienation from one's source in the One Mind.

Individual human consciousness exists in a reality that is separated and differentiated. Subjective consciousness is differentiated from the objective world. The activity of the rational mind further differentiates the world into individual, separate entities, each of which is considered to be essentially autonomous but secondarily related to other entities by means of various logical rules (e.g., the rule of noncontradiction). All aspects of human existence including knowing and thinking take place presupposing this foundation in differentiation and rationality.

Existing human beings cannot, within the limits of the rational structure of existence, come to know the source of that existence since the source, "suchness," is not governed and constituted by the rational structures through which knowing takes place. Suchness is not simply one entity within existence that can be known by conventional means. Individual consciousness (<u>shih</u>) is, on the basis of its constitutent rationality, powerless to terminate its alienation from its original source in the One Mind.

However, in Fa-tsang's paradoxical thought it may be possible that thinking can direct itself in such a way that it remains

open to that which is beyond the domain of thought.[52] Although thinking must proceed in terms of its rational structure, there is no rule of rationality that requires that reality must appear in a rational, noncontradictory way. If rational thought entertains the possibility that reality may appear in a nonrational, paradoxical way, then that form of thought is one that remains open to the manifestation of what lies beyond thought. A paradoxical thought is one that is fully aware of the limits of rational thought, and on that basis is open and receptive to its own sublation in the presence of that which is other than thought and rationality.

Fa-tsang's paradoxical language can therefore be interpreted as a mode of thinking that directs one beyond the realm in which conventional rationality is in effect. His use of paradox expresses the emptiness of the subject/object split, of objective discrimination, and so on, and in doing that it points to what is beyond subject and object, beyond discriminated form, and so on. Paradoxical thinking is a receptive mode of thought that simultaneously employs and denies the forms of rational thought. It is a form of thought that, even though it cannot grasp nonrational, undifferentiated reality, nevertheless remains open and receptive to the possibility of its appearance.

But as we have seen, paradox is not simply the orientation of the subject toward ultimate truth and reality; it is also the form

[52]This insight is derived from Scharlemann, "Theological Questions I," p. 278.

of the manifestation of that truth. Unconditioned emptiness makes its appearance in a paradoxical way by simultaneously affirming and negating the conditioned form through which it appears. Objectively, paradox is the form of the appearance of unconditioned emptiness; subjectively, paradox is the form of thought that corresponds to that appearance.[53] Paradox is the form through which suchness is expressed, and the form through which it is received. When both sides of the subject/object relation correspond in a paradoxical way, that is the occasion for the breakthrough into existence of that which is other than existence.

Paradox, then, entails the simultaneous affirmation and negation of logic, language, and the differentiated forms of consciousness. The negation of thought in paradox functions to direct one beyond thought and the domain of rationality to the unconditioned ground of conventional awareness in the One Mind or emptiness. However, in the negation or denial of rational thought, thought is simultaneously affirmed. Language and logic, the bases of conventional awareness, are affirmed as the only means of access to ultimate truth. Emptiness is present to consciousness only as it exists in form. Language and logic, which are created in the self-negation of the One Mind, not only obscure one's identity in suchness but are also necessary conditions for the possibility of enlightenment, or return to one's source (<u>yüan</u>). Apart from the differentiating,

[53]Ibid., pp. 251-52.

logical character of conventional truth, ultimate truth cannot be known.

Fa-tsang's texts show the relativity of all language and logic by situating conventional truth within the perspective of emptiness and the dialectic of the One Mind. This does not, however, involve a complete denial of language and logic. Fa-tsang is not advocating the return to a state of preknowing where pure identity absorbs all difference. His texts can be seen as the attempt to point to the unconditioned ground of all knowledge _within_ the conditioned forms of knowing. The experience of true emptiness to which the texts are receptive in their paradoxical language is neither the experience of one new perspective among others, nor the abolition of all perspectives. Rather, it is the experience, within perspectival form, of the basis or foundation (_pên_) on which all perspectives arise and take form. Fa-tsang calls it the perfect or complete (_yüan_) truth, despite the fact that it emerges in terms of one particular form or perspective because the manifestation of emptiness reveals the ultimate reality in all forms.

Without language and conventional forms of awareness, there would be no conscious experience of the breakthrough of emptiness. Conventional truth is the medium through which that experience takes place. Completely formless experience is no experience at all. Identity can only be known and experienced through difference. The differentiation of the One Mind in individual minds creates the possibility for reflexive awareness of the One Mind. Language

and logic, therefore, are not simply negated in the enlightening experience but are paradoxically negated and affirmed at the same time.

Paradox in Fa-tsang's texts can be interpreted both as an expression emerging from the experience of true emptiness and as a means to elicit that experience in the reader or hearer. As a skillful means (fang-pien/upāya) to evoke the experience of suchness, paradox is found in the texts at the conclusion of almost every series of assertions. In his shorter, meditative works Fa-tsang employs paradox as the climax to brief, one paragraph contemplations (kuan/vipaśyanā). A typical structure in these contemplations is to introduce an affirmative point followed by a negation of that affirmation. Rather than concluding with a solution to the contradiction, Fa-tsang simply plays the two polar elements against each other in blatantly paradoxical assertions. By maintaining the tension between the two opposites, the texts encourage and elicit openness and receptivity which may be the occasion for the breakthrough of that which grounds and unites both elements in the opposition. In these paradoxical contemplations Fa-tsang attempts to evoke a mode of being in the world that is open to and in awareness of unconditioned emptiness. This mode of being cannot be maintained by adherence to either pole in the opposition, but rather by remaining receptive to emptiness, which may be perceptible in the unity of the two opposites.

Since it is not existentially possible to think about, or to grasp, or to refer to suchness without objectifying it (thus making it a conditioned form rather than unconditioned), Fa-tsang's statements and assertions about suchness always include their own negation. This method is to refer to suchness (rather than remaining silent) and thus to objectify it, but in a paradoxical way that includes a denial of the same reference. The reference to suchness is completed and denied in such a way that no attachment to the reference itself will obstruct the appearance and awareness of its referent.

The skillful means that is involved in the soteriological use of paradox is the capacity to use language fluidly and dynamically so that one "settles down" in neither pole of the opposition, neither affirmation nor negation, but remains open to what lies between them. This means that the bodhisattva must use concepts in such a way that they remove or deny themselves so that they refer beyond themselves to the non-conceptual basis of all concepts, emptiness.

This use of paradox bears great resemblance to the use of the kung-an (koan) in the Ch'an (Zen) school of Chinese Buddhism. In fact, the origins of the kung-an in the Ch'an school can be traced to paradoxical contemplations (kuan) in the texts of Fa-tsang and others. In the Ch'an school, kung-an are "public cases" of paradoxical utterances issuing from the enlightened awareness of Ch'an masters. These utterances are typically responses

that contradict all expectations in a given situation by uniting two elements (often a question and an answer) that cannot be united within the limits of conventional truth. Kung-an may be interpreted as an immediate human response to the awareness of the ultimate truth of suchness; they emerge spontaneously from the mind of the master without conceptual premeditation.

In the latter history of the Ch'an school, these ecstatic utterances were compiled and recorded to be employed as a skillful means to evoke the experience from which they originally emerged. They were used as meditative or contemplative devices by means of which one could exhaust conceptuality and come into view of the limits of thought. As was the case in our interpretation of Fa-tsang's paradoxical assertions, the self-negation of thought to which one may arrive in systematic contemplation of a kung-an is precisely the point at which thought is open and receptive to what is beyond the realm of thought.

Furthermore, in the Ch'an school, kung-an came to be not only the means for a master to impart realization to a student, but also a means to judge and authenticate that experience. A student's response to a kung-an can be judged in terms of its depth, spontaneity, and paradoxicality. Thus, a paradoxical response that originates spontaneously in the depth of the mind can be verified by an enlightened master as a response arising out of true realization. Recognition of and assent to paradox became one method of identifying the authentic realization of emptiness.

In both the _Ch'an_ and the _Hua-yen_ schools, the breakthrough of unconditioned emptiness that might be elicited by means of a paradoxical contemplation (_kuan_) or a "public case" (_kung-an_) occurs in a _sudden_ realization (_tun-chüeh_). Neither Fa-tsang's paradox nor the _kung-an_ is conceptually resolvable but is efficacious in an immediate intuition. Intuition here is understood as the breaking into awareness and existence of that which cannot be derived from existence. One is suddenly and paradoxically aware of unconditioned emptiness within the forms of existence. The form that mediates the immediate intuition is exhausted (_chin_), yet simultaneously and paradoxically is affirmed in its existence.

The sudden breakthrough that is the culminating goal of the paradoxical _kuan_ and the _kung-an_ is experienced as an ecstatic state in which the separation and autonomy of subject and object are overcome. The bodhisattva is immediately conscious of the unconditioned foundation of both subject and object in emptiness. Although the final separation between subject and object is overcome, they are not experienced as merged together into an indistinguishable identity. The unity of subject and object is revealed together with their difference. It is still possible to describe the experience in terms of both subject and object.

The objective side of the experience has been described at great length as the dependently originating _dharmadhātu_. In sudden realization, unconditioned emptiness becomes manifest in conditioned form. Each phenomenon of experience symbolizes unconditioned emptiness.

All entities are perceived as intrinsically interrelated and interpenetrating so that no entity is independent and autonomous. The relative existence of each reveals the principle (li) of true emptiness.

But even though it is possible to describe the objective side of the experience, one is not aware of emptiness as something over against and isolated from oneself as subject. In the experience of suchness one fully realizes one's own situation within the intricate web of interrelations. In this realization the alienation of the subject from the objective world is overcome in the awareness of the fundamental connection between them.

On the subjective side of the experience, the sudden breakthrough of true emptiness involves the paradoxical awareness that one's personal thoughts and activities do not derive simply from oneself as an individual subject. On the contrary, without destroying individual subjectivity one experiences one's own thoughts and activities as those of the One Mind within onself. In individual enlightenment the One Mind returns to itself from its alienation in differentiated form. In the contemplation of a paradoxical kuan or a k'ung-an, one attempts to grasp unconditioned emptiness through the paradox. However, if the contemplation is truly efficacious, the situation is reversed. The experience is one of being grasped by or taken up into unconditioned emptiness. For Fa-tsang, this experience is doctrinally known as the arising of nature or the tathāgatagarbha, which is the experience of the

Buddha becoming manifest within oneself, breaking down the barriers and limitations of the individual self.[54] But here again, this is not the annihilation of the self but rather its fulfillment. Universal, identical suchness becomes manifest through the subject without destroying its individuality or uniqueness.

For Fa-tsang, the sudden breakthrough of enlightenment does not entail the unveiling of any absolute doctrines or ethical principles. In unconditioned emptiness, no positive, graspable content is given. Suchness is not conditioned by any form or conceptual structure. And doctrines and symbols that are illuminated in the experience are illuminated precisely in their emptiness, that is, no doctrine or symbol is absolute and permanent. In fact, what is given in the experience is the capacity to exist freely without attachment to any form at all whether that form is a doctrine, or a symbol, or anything else.

Thus the concept of truth that prevails in the thought of Fa-tsang does not involve a correspondence between a concept of reality and the reality that the concept attempts to grasp. Ultimately, no such correspondence is possible. For Fa-tsang, truth is what is immediately revealed from beyond the limits of reality

[54]This situation is the same with the Zen koan. As long as I am answering the koan, I don't have it. When an answer spontaneously emerges from beneath the limits of my conceptual grasp and conscious control, then an appropriate answer may have been given. The authentic response is the Buddha responding within me.

(shih-chi/bhūta-koṭi) when thought appropriately opens itself to its source and foundation. And, according to Fa-tsang's texts, an appropriate openness or nonattachment can be achieved in the contemplation of paradox, a self-negating thought that is open to a dimension that transcends thought.

Even though ultimate truth (chên-t'i) cannot be attributed to any doctrine of symbol, there is a criterion for judging the relative truth of doctrines and symbols. That criterion is expressed in the idea of upāya. Buddhist doctrines and symbols are true to the extent that they effectively evoke an immediate and self-authenticating awareness of "ultimate truth." Their truth is not the correspondence of their content with reality, but rather their capacity to point beyond their own empty form to the ground of all form in emptiness.

It would be appropriate to Fa-tsang's expression of the doctrine of the two truths to understand conventional truth (su-t'i/saṃvṛti-satya) and ultimate truth (chên-t'i/paramārtha satya) in terms of two possible and alternative modes of being in the world. Conventional truth is the ordinary mode of being that is characterized by the static differentiation and separation of reality by human consciousness. One who participates in this mode of being is not aware of the emptiness and relativity of conventional truth and of reality itself. Attachment to the ultimacy of one's own distinctions and perspective implies one's alienation from the source and

ground of reality in emptiness. This alienation is the suffering of all human beings.

Ultimate truth does not involve a set of propositions about reality but is an immediate awareness of reality itself. The emergence of this awareness generates a new mode of being in the world. Enlightened awareness does not assume the final separation of the existing self from the world. In this mode, to be in the world is to see the infinite relatedness that unites and grounds reality beyond the separation of self and world.

The perception of relatedness (i.e., true emptiness) in ultimate truth leads to the bodhisattva's compassion (pei/karuna). The ultimate truth of emptiness is not simply the negation of phenomenal reality and form in view of a transcendent absolute. On the contrary, to perceive the true emptiness of all form is to become a medium for the infinite compassion of the Buddha, which is expressed in care and respect for all form. To be aware of emptiness both subjectively and objectively is to see one's unity and identity with all other beings.

The bodhisattva's everyday mode of being can be characterized by an openness and receptivity that is lacking in the conventional mode. The bodhisattva is open and receptive in every moment of consciousness to what may be revealed to him beyond and through what can be actively grasped in a conceptual form. For one who perceives true emptiness there is no grasping, no settling down, and no attachment to the forms of existence that eternally make

their appearance and disappear, but rather an attentiveness to their dynamic, symbolic power. The bodhisattva's receptivity is achieved by living in the tension between affirmation and negation. The enlightened being directs himself toward reality in terms of the conventional structures and forms of consciousness; but he does so not simply in terms of either their affirmation or negation but by paradoxically uniting affirmation and negation in every act of consciousness. Form and emptiness are both present in every moment of awareness.

We have therefore described this mode of being as one that consistently involves paradox. For one who participates in conventional truth and its mode of being, paradox generates a discomfort—an uneasiness that arises in the opposition to conventional awareness. This is the case since to accept sincerely and to confront a paradox is to open oneself to that which is other than familiar conventional truth. But for Fa-tsang, that openness is precisely the place and the occasion for the manifestation of ultimate truth. Ultimate truth may emerge between the affirmation and the negation of conventional truth.

The norm for this unity of affirmation and negation in Fa-tsang's thought is the symbol emptiness. In denying (negation) itself (affirmation), it refers to true emptiness. The self-negation of emptiness corresponds to and is the norm for the bodhisattva's self-negation. By emptying (i.e., not being attached to) his own knowledge and perspective on truth, he gains wisdom and ultimate

truth. In the act of surrendering his self (*ātman*), he actualizes his true self (*tathāgatagarbha*). In freely giving up his own nirvāṇa, he realizes the true nirvāṇa already peresent in all reality.

# APPENDIX

## List of Chinese Characters

ai
愛

An Shih-kao
安世高

Ch'an
禪

chên hsin
真心

chên hsing
真性

chên-ju
真如

chên-k'ung
真空

chên-shih
真實

chên-t'i
真諦

ch'êng
成

chêng
證

Ch'êng-kuan
澄觀

chi
即

chi
寂

ch'i
起

Chi-tsang
吉藏

chieh
解

chien-chüeh
漸決

chih
止

Chih-i
智顗

chih-kuan
止觀

chih-li
至理

Chih-tun
支遁

Chih-yen
智儼

chin
盡

Chin-shih-tzŭ-chang
金獅子章

ch'ing
情

Ching-t'u
淨土

ch'u
除

chüan
卷

chung-chiao
終教

fa
法

fa-chieh
法界

fa-chieh kuan-men
法界觀門

fa-chieh yüan-ch'i
法界緣起

fa-hsiang
法相

fa-hsing
法性

fa-shen
法身

Fa-tsang
法藏

fang-pien
方便

fên-pieh
分別

fên-pieh hsing
分別性

fo
佛

fo-hsing
佛性

Han
漢

hsiang
相

hsiang-i
相依

hsiang-ju
相入

hsien
顯

hsien-li
顯理

hsin
心

hsin
信

hsing
行

hsing
性

hsing-ch'i
性起

hsing t'sung li ch'i
性從理起

hsüan
玄

hsüan-hsüeh
玄學

Hua-yen
華嚴

Hua-yen ching
華嚴經

Hua-yen ching T'an hsüan chi
華嚴經探玄記

Hua-yen i-hai pai-men
華嚴義海百門

huai
壞

i
依

i
異

i
一

i chi hsiang-wei
義極相違

i-hsiang
異相

i-hsin
一心

i i k'ung ming shih
以一空明事

i t'i
一體

i t'i
異體

i-wei
一味

ju
如

ju-ju
如如

ju-lai
如來

ju-lai tsang
如來藏

ju-shih
如實

jung
融

kên-pen
根本

ko-i
格義

kou-jan
垢染

k'u
苦

kuan
觀

kuan-men
觀門

k'ung
空

k'ung chi se
空即色

k'ung wu so yu
空無所有

k'ung wu tzŭ hsing
空無自性

kuei
歸

kuei yüan
歸源

Kuo Hsiang
享象

<u>liao-yin</u>
了因

<u>li-hsüeh</u>
理學

<u>li</u> <u>yen</u> <u>ming</u>
離言名

<u>Lo-yang</u>
洛陽

<u>mao</u>
矛

<u>men</u>
門

<u>min</u>
泯

<u>ming</u>
明

<u>ming</u>
名

<u>mo</u>
末

<u>nei-hsün</u>
內熏

<u>neng</u>
能

<u>neng-i</u>
能依

<u>neng-so</u>
能所

<u>nieh-p'an</u>
涅槃

<u>p'an</u> <u>chiao</u>
判教

<u>pan-jo</u>
般若

<u>Pan-jo</u> <u>po-lo-mi-to</u> <u>hsin</u> <u>ching</u> <u>lüeh</u> <u>shu</u>
般若波羅蜜多心經略疏

<u>pei</u>
悲

<u>pên-chio</u>
本覺

<u>pên-hsing</u>
本性

<u>pên-wu</u>
本無

<u>pi-an</u>
彼岸

<u>piao</u>
表

pien
遍

ping
病

p'ing-teng
平 等

p'ɔ
破

p'o-t'se
叵 測

pu-chi
不 即

pu-ch'ü
不 取

pu-chu
不 住

pu-i
不 異

pu-ke shuo
不 可 說

pu-k'ung
不 空

pu-pien
不 變

p'u-t'i
菩 提

p'u-t'i hsin
菩 提 心

San-lun
三 論

sê
色

sê chi k'ung
色 即 空

shê
攝

shê-lun
攝 論

shih
事

shih-chi
實 際

shih-chiao
始 教

shih shih wu-ai
事 事 無 礙

shun
順

so
所

so-i
所依

Sui
隋

Sung
宋

Sung-kao-seng-chüan
宋高僧傳

su-t'i
俗諦

Ta ch'êng ch'i-hsin lun
大乘起信論

Ta-chih
大智

ta-pei
大悲

T'an-hsüan chi
探玄記

T'ang
唐

Tao
道

Ti-lun
地論

T'i
體

T'ien-t'ai
天台

ting
定

tso
作

tsu
祖

tsung
宗

Tsung-mi
宗密

Tu-shun
杜順

tuan-k'ung
斷空

tun
頓

tun
盾

tun-chüeh
頓決

tun-hsien
頓顯

t'ung-hsiang
同相

t'ung-shih
同時

t'ung-t'i
同體

tz'ŭ-an
此岸

tzŭ-hsing
自性

wan-jan
宛然

wang
亡

Wang Pi
王弼

wei
違

wei-hsin
唯心

wei-shih
唯識

wo
我

wu
物

wu
無

wu-ai
無碍

wu-ch'ang
無常

wu-chi
無寄

wu-chiao chang
五教章

wu-chih
無執

wu-êrh
無二

wu-hsiang
無相

wu-hsiang ting
無相定

wu-hsing chih li
無性之理

wu-ming
無明

wu-sheng chih li
無生之理

wu-shih
無始

wu-so yu
無所有

Wu Tse T'ien
武則天

wu-wei
無為

wu-wo
無我

yao
藥

ye
業

yin
隱

yu
有

yu-wei
有為

yüan
緣

yüan
源

yüan-ch'i
緣起

yüan-chiao
圓教

yün
蘊

yün-hua
雲華

yung
用

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